

THE HISTORY OF MEDIAEVAL ASSAM(A.D. 1228 to 1603).

Thesis submitted for the Degree of the Doctor of
Philosophy in the University of London.

Nagendra Nath Acharyya

The School of Oriental and African Studies,
London.

1st June, 1957.

ProQuest Number: 10731273

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 10731273

Published by ProQuest LLC (2017). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

CONTENTS

Page

Abstract.
Acknowledgments.
Abbreviations.

INTRODUCTION:

i. General Review.....	1-8.
ii. Geography.....	9-10.
iii. Land.....	10-12.
iv. People.....	12-13.
v. Political Condition:	
1. Tibet.....	13-14.
2. Burma and the Shan Kingdoms.....	14-15.
3. China.....	15-16.
4. India west of Assam.....	16-17.
5. Assam.....	17-18.
vi. Sources:	
1. Literary Source.....	19-37.
2. Archaeological Source.....	38-42.
3. Foreign Accounts.....	42-44.

PART I. THE AHOMS.

CHAPTER I. The Rise of Ahom Kingdom:

1. Origin.....	45-48.
2. Outline History.....	48-49.
3. The name 'Assam'.....	49-52.
4. Capitals.....	52-53.
5. Contributions.....	52-54.
6. Sukapha.....	54-65.

CHAPTER II. The early Ahom Kings.....

CHAPTER III. Climacteric of the early Ahoms.....

CHAPTER IV. Ahom Administration.....

PART II. THE NON-AHOMS.

CHAPTER V. The Kingdom of Kamrup or Kamata.....

CHAPTER VI. The Koches.....

CHAPTER VII. The Kacharis.....

CHAPTER VIII. The Kingdom of Jayantia.....

CHAPTER IX. The Chutias.....

CHAPTER X. The Nagas.....

CONCLUSION.....

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....

APPENDIX A.....

APPENDIX B.....

APPENDIX C.....

GLOSSARY.....

MAP..... in the pocket attached with cover.

APP. D

An Abstract of the thesis.

Title: The History of Mediaeval Assam, 1228-1603.

As the title indicates, the scope of my work covers a wide field of study, consisting of the political history of Assam from the early part of the 13th century to the beginning of the 17th. The history of the period offers fresh ground for the seekers of historical truth.

In the introduction I have discussed the geography, people, land and the sources, laying especial emphasis on the Buranjis- their character, originality and importance as sources of Indian history. Besides this I have dealt with the political condition of Assam and its neighbouring countries, Burma, China, Tibet and the rest of India, early ~~X~~ in the 13th century. The origin of the Ahoms and the title 'Assam' are also discussed here. The rest of the work has been divided into two parts: in the first I have discussed the history of the Ahoms, their original homeland and their route of migration to Assam. Next I have shown their first settlement in the Brahmaputra valley and their gradual expansion and integration until they formed a powerful kingdom over a large region in the north-eastern frontier of India, early in the 16th century, under Suhungmung. At the same time I have pointed out the gradual Hinduisation of the Ahoms, until they formed a synthetic^{civilisation} of their own having been simultaneously influenced by the Shan culture on the one hand and the Indian on the other. Besides this the administration of the Ahoms, a synthesis of various systems of government, is also narrated there.

In the second part I have discussed the history of the later Kamrupi kings, the Koches, the Kacharis, the Jayat⁷ias, the Chutias and the Nagas.

In conclusion, I have shown that there was a cultural renaissance in Assam inaugurated by Sankardev, which fully influenced the minds and culture of the people to commence a new era in their history.

Acknowledgments.

I shall be failing in my duty if I do not take the opportunity of acknowledging my gratitude to all the workers in the field of Assam's history, to whom I have referred throughout my study. I hope I can repay the debt that I owe to them by presenting them with a work, that to a great extent got its inspiration from their contributions. I crave their pardon where the opinions on topics which I have examined critically differ from theirs on the basis of historical truth.

I wish to acknowledge very sincerely the help and advice of Dr. A.L. Basham, who has been chiefly responsible for the supervision of my work, and also of several others who have given very valuable assistance in connexion with special aspects of it; chief among these are Professor D.G.E.Hall, Professor C.V.F.Haimendorf, Dr. F.Hardy and Dr. Hla Pe. I am also indebted to the Royal Greenwich Observatory, Hurstmonceaux, for information regarding the eclipse of 1486.

I must also acknowledge the advice of Dr. B.C.Browne, Trinity College, Cambridge, and Brigadier, G.Bomford at Brasenose College, Oxford, and Ernest Tillotson, Honorary Secretary, Seismological Committee, British Association for the advancement of Science, London, who kindly gave me the information regarding the earthquakes, which unfortunately was of no help to me in writing this thesis. I am also grateful to Dr. R.C.Majumdar and Dr. D.C. Sarkar, whom I met at London, during the Asian History Conference of 1956, for their valuable suggestions in connection with my queries on some special

aspects of the thesis. My sincere regard to Professor S. Bhattacharyya and Dr. V.V. Rao, of the University of Gauhati, for replying to my enquiries with regard to some particular points. Though they were unable to give any significant information not contained in the sources available at London, I must thank them for their courtesy.

I have also ^{the} pleasant duty to acknowledge my gratitude to Professor Philips, the staff and the post-graduate students of the Department of History and other ^{departments} ~~subjects~~ of the School of Oriental and African Studies, ^{in the} for their discussion and help at the seminars and ^A Reading Room.

I must also express my sincere gratitude to the Librarians and staffs of the Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies, the India Office Library, the British Museum Library, the Library of the University of London, and that of the Royal Asiatic Society, for their kindness and invaluable help.

Finally I am deeply indebted to my wife Srimati Anjali Acharyya, and the members of my family in Assam, for their great help and encouragement during my stay in England.

London, 1957.

N.N. Acharyya,

Abbreviations

A.B.	Bhuyan S.K. (ed.)	Assam Buranji
A.C.R.		Assam Census Report
A.D.G.		Assam District Gazetteers
A.H.B.	Barua G.C. (ed.)	Ahom Buranji
A.R.C.A.		Administrative Report on the Census of Assam
B.C.R.		Bengal Census Report
B.D.G.		Bengal District Gazetteers
B.D.R.		Bengal District Records
C.B.	Barua J.K. (ed.)	Chutia Buranji
C.H.I.	Haig W. (ed.)	Cambridge History of India, Vol. III
C.R.		Calcutta Review
D.A.B.	Bhuyan S.K. (ed.)	Deodhai Asam Buranji
D.R.V.	Goswami H.C. (ed.)	Darrang Raj Vamsavali
E.H.K.	Barua K.L.	Early History of Kamarupa
E.I.M.		Epigraphia Indo-Moslenica
G.C.	Thakur R.C.	Guru Charitra
G.U.B.S.S.		Gazetteers of Upper Burma and the Shan States
H.A.	Gait E.	History of Assam
H.B.	Dacca University	History of Bengal
H.C.P.A.	P.C. Choudhury	History of Civilisation of the people of Assam
H.S.	Elias N.	History of the Shans
I.A.		Indian Antiquities
I.A.Y.		Indian Antiquary
I.H.Q.		Indian Historical Quarterly
J.A.S.B.		Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal
J.B.O.R.S.		Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society
J.B.	Bhuyan S.K. (ed.)	Jayantia Buranji
J.A.R.S.		Journal of Assam Research Society
J.I.H.		Journal of Indian History
J.U.G.		Journal of University of Gauhati
K.B.	Bhuyan S.K. (ed.)	Kachari Buranji
K.R.B.	,,	Kamrupar Buranji
K.S.	Bhattacharya P.N. (ed.)	Kamarupa Sasanavali
L.S.I.	Grierson G.	Linguistic Survey of India
M.A.S.B.		Memoirs of Asiatic Society of Bengal
M.C.E.F.S.	Fisher	Memoirs of countries on & near eastern frontier of
M.N.E.F.P.	Bhattacharya S.N.	Mughal north-east frontier policy. Sylhet
M.O.		Musismata Orientalia
P.A.B.	Goswami H.C. (ed.)	Purani Asam Buranji
R.B.D.		Report on the Bengal Districts
R.C.K.A.S.		Report and the conspectus of Kamrup Amusandhan Sami-
R.E.F.B.I.		Report on the eastern frontier of British India. ti.
R.O.R.A.S.		Report on the old records of Assam Secretariat
R.P.H.R.A.	Gait E.	Report on the progress of Historical Research in
R.S.B.		Rudra Singhar Buranji. Assam
S.A.A.	Hunter W.W.	Statistical Account of Assam
S.A.B.	,,	Statistical Account of Bengal
S.H.K.	Vasu N.N.	Social History of Kamarupa
S.R.B.G.		Selections from the Records of the Bengal governme- nt.
T.N.	Minhaj-us-Siraj	Tabakat-i-Nasiri

INTRODUCTION

The history of mediaeval Assam offers an almost unexplored and uninvestigated field of study. The title of the thesis indicates that the scope of our work is the political history of Assam from A.D. 1228-1603. Little work has been done on the period under review. The history of this period forms one of the most interesting but little known chapters in the annals of Assam. Here an humble attempt has been made, we think for the first time, to reproduce in comprehensive manner, as based on original sources, the political history of this fascinating period of Assam's history. With the centre of political gravity shifting from Kamrup to Kamatapur in the west and Garhgaon in the east, the period saw the threshold of a new phase, characterised by the arrival, growth and consolidation of a new power, the Ahoms. We have shown in this treatise how the different parts of the Brahmaputra valley and the various tribes of the extreme North-eastern frontier and the Surma valley were conquered one after another by a new house of Shan invaders. The period saw also the development of a deliberate policy on the part of the Muhammadans in the west and the Naras in the east to subvert the political unity and reduce the frontiers of mediaeval Assam. The thesis has taken into ^{account} ~~consideration~~ the rise and consolidation of many powers, the Ahoms, the Kacharis, the Koches, the Chutias and the Jayantias. The period under consideration also marked the settlement in Assam of several hordes of immigrants from Upper Burma, Western Yunnan and North and Eastern Bengal.

Assam is in many ways a country of exceptional interest. With her multifarious people and races, her tribal problems and strategic position, she presents a very variegated and engrossing field of study. She was the first abode in India of the Mongolian immigrants from Hukong valley and south-western China. Although in the plains, a good deal of this population has lost its original physiognomy and other affinities, in respect of physique, language, religion and social custom, its relation to other branches of the same family forms a most interesting line of enquiry for the ethnologists. The religion of the Assamese people has an all-Indian importance. Here the strange Tantrik developments of both Hinduism and Buddhism appeared in strength very early and much influenced the religion ^{the} of Indian sub-continent. The Goddess Kamakhya, on the Nilachal hill, is still worshipped for the attainment of 'Moksha' or 'Nirvana' as the omnipotent and omnipresent supreme authority. The country is well known in Hindu traditions as a land of sorcery, magic and witchcraft.

Though little in the way of art and architecture has survived from our period, it is clear that much creative work took place in these fields of activity. Dalton speaks highly of the architecture of mediaeval Assam.¹ In describing the Ahom palace at Garhgaon, a historian in the Seventeenth century says that " my pen fails to describe in detail the other arts and rare inventions employed in decorating the woodwork of this palace. Probably nowhere in the World can wooden houses be built with such decoration and figure-carving as by the people of this country."²

(1) J.A.S.B., 1855. p.13.

(2) Fathiya-i-ibriya, J.B.O.R.S., 1915. p.193.

3

Assam is one of the few countries in India whose people checked the tide of Muhammadan conquest and maintained their independence in the face of repeated attempts to subvert it. From the beginning of the Muslim rule in India, several attempts were made to bring the whole of Assam under its sway, but historical records both in Assamese and Persian show that each and every invasion was ably resisted. From the strategic point of view, this was by no means an ordinary success on the part of the Assamese people.

Assam has always held a distinct and independent political existence. "Though the process of Hinduisation of the non-aryan tribes went on from early times the converts were very few and the province remained, therefore, a land of heterogeneous social strains with linguistic divergences."¹ At different periods of Assam's history she became a refuge of many peoples. In fact, she was one of the few places in India which may be "looked upon as a federation hall, where the most ancient and the most modern, the most antiquated and the most up to date, are found to meet together upon terms of perfect cordiality. The followers of all schools of philosophy- the Vedic, the P^uranik and the Tantrik have thrived here equally well, and the people of all the races, the Aryans and non-Aryans, the Hindus and non-Hindus have equally contributed to the building up of the social fabric of Kamarupa. (Assam.) In a word, with the ancient history of this glorious land is indissolubly bound up the social, religious and national history of the whole of India."² Racial and linguistic harmony, having become a general ideal for all the Indian people, can be arrived at, if Assam in her own way begins the task by creating a sense of mutual co-operation and brotherhood

(1)H.A. Intro. p. VIII.

(2)S.H.K. V.I.pp. 1-2.

among her people of heterogeneous origin, and her culture, having a distinct entity and independent character of its own, can thus contribute best to the culture and prosperity of India as a whole.

In spite of all this, there is probably no part of India about whose past less is generally known. In the history of India as a whole, Assam is seldom mentioned, and few writers are found to have devoted more than a dozen lines to the treatment of the history of this province. But the history of Assam, whether ancient or mediaeval, is as important and interesting as the history of any other part of India. So far as our period is concerned, a few writers have, however, dealt with it in their own way.

In A.D. 1800, Wade wrote "An Account of Assam"¹. This is a voluminous production. The writer appears to have taken great pains in gathering materials from the Buranjis and the chronicles. But the dates mentioned in his work are not all correct. It remained in manuscript in the place where it was possibly first deposited, and no attempt was made to bring it into light and publish it until 1927. Thus it was not available to Gait. In 1841, Robinson published his "Descriptive Account of Assam"². As the title indicates it is mainly a work on the geography and the natural aspects of the country rather than its political history. It is poor in assessing the historical materials of our period. In 1872, Blochmann wrote an article headed "Koch Bihār, Koch Hajo, and Asam in the 16th and 17th centuries, according to the Akbarnamah, the Padishahnamah and the Fathiyah-i-Ibriyah"³.

¹ Wade J.P. Edit. Sarma B. Calcutta, 1927.

² Robinson W. Calcutta, 1841.

³ J.A.S.B. 1872, pp. 49-101.

This is a picture from a one-sided angle and is neither accurate nor complete. The Buranjis and the local chronicles appear to have been sealed books to its author. In 1905, Sir Edward Gait published "A History of Assam"¹ This is no doubt the first historical work on Assam, on the lines of modern research. He has elaborately discussed the history of ancient and mediaeval Assam but has hardly done justice to the period under discussion. He has written hardly a page on the history of the Chutias which deserves a chapter in itself. His contribution on the history of Kamrup or Kamata from the beginning of the Thirteenth century to the rise of the Koches in the beginning of the Sixteenth is practically nothing. He has not dealt separately the history of the Nagas of our period. Moreover, the work is open to criticism in several particulars. It was compiled with the aid of pandits, many of whose translations are incorrect. These had access to manuscript materials which are still unpublished, and some of which apparently contained details not mentioned in known Buranjis. Gait has often made use of such materials without mentioning his source,^{or} giving his readers any idea of its origin. Thus his history is by no means up to the best modern standard of historical scholarship. In 1929, Bhattacharyya published "A History of Mughal North East Frontier Policy"² This is devoted mainly to the diplomatic relations of the Mughal Empire with Koch Behar, Kamrup and Assam. The book records the accounts of the Muslim raids and invasions of Assam and is written from the point of view of the Mughal

¹ Ibid. Gait E. Calcutta, 1905. 2nd. Ed., 1926.

² Ibid. Bhattacharyya S.N. Calcutta, 1929.

Empire. Its contribution to the history of Assam is practically nothing. Moreover, many of his conclusions are incorrect. In 1933, Barua published his "Early History of Kamarupa"¹ It is a systematic account of the early history of Kamrup and has no bearing on the history of mediaeval Assam. Its contribution to geography and ethnology is negligible.

From the above review, it becomes evident that there are no books on Assam describing our period in detail. But it was during this period that the Bhuyans, a new class of nobility, came into prominence and fought to their utmost for the defence, integration and progress of Assam. A new system of government, the administrative system of the Ahoms, peculiar in Indian history, proved successful in ~~the country~~ a country, remote and bounded by natural defences. The Paik system of land tenure was established by the warrior Ahoms. The introduction of historiography into Assam by the Ahoms, was one of ~~the~~ ^{their} greatest cultural contributions, also took place during this period. The Kacharis were driven to the further south to Maibong from the Subansiri valley. The kingdom of the Chutias was annihilated and annexed to the Ahom country. In lower Assam a new House, the Koches, came into existence and proved the greatest obstacle to the penetration of Islam. A perpetual policy of repression and violation was undertaken by the Ahoms against the indefatigable and indomitable Naga tribes. By far the greatest innovation of this period is the foundation of a new religion based on the enlightened doctrine of Bhakti as revealed in the Sastras. It was a cultural and progressive movement which laid emphasis on the unity of the Godhead, stood against excessive ritualism, preached a faith based on constant

¹ Barua K.L. Shillong, 1933.

devotion, fought against caste prejudices and stressed the equality of man. The preacher of this faith was the reformer Sankaradeva, who, founding Satras and erecting Namghars, propagated his liberal doctrine throughout the country and influenced the Assamese nation to inaugurate a literary renaissance. All these features give importance to our period and make a new and thorough study of it desirable.

It is not because of the paucity of materials and their fabulous nature that a good history of mediaeval Assam is yet to be written, but owing to weakness in properly assessing the known materials. That the Ahoms established a powerful kingdom in the north-eastern quarter of the Indian sub-continent and ruled there gloriously for about 600 years, is a fact which appears to have been almost ignored at the present time. Worst still, ^{is} the fact that no reference to the most important achievement of Assam in checking the Muslim penetration in the north-eastern frontier of the mediaeval Hindustan, finds a place in any standard work. It is unfortunate that while a number of excellent histories of this period have been written in recent years on the different provinces of India, no historian since Gait has attempted to study this fascinating and patriotic chapter of Indian history according to the principles of modern historical research. In short, the history of mediaeval ~~2~~ Assam remains practically a virgin field of study, and further work on it is a desideratum. We have tried here not only to find new information but also to evaluate the existing facts, and ^{have} made an honest and sincere attempt to the reconstruction of the history of the land on a reasonable foundation.

We claim originality in dealing with the history of Kamrup from the beginning of the Thirteenth century to the beginning of the Sixteenth. So far no one has attempted to arrange and collate the available traditions and legends to produce a historical survey after proper investigation and assessment. We have added a new chapter to the history of Assam on the Chutias, after critically examining the available sources. Our attempt as to the confirmation of the dates mentioned in the Buranjis, by means of scientific evidence, has been duly rewarded when we have found the occurrence of an eclipse of the Sun in 1486, mentioned in the Buranji, recorded in the register of H.M. Nautical Almanac office, Royal Greenwich Observatory, ^{Herstmonceux,} Sussex. A further completely original contribution is our handling of the history of the Nagas throughout our period on the basis of the Buranjis and local chronicles. Besides these, we have utilised with profit some valuable materials from periodicals and journals, contributed by many scholars to the history of Assam.

In describing many of the events we have made interpretations and reached conclusions different from those made by eminent scholars of the subject, and as such many of our findings may appear unpalatable, but we have attempted never to deviate from the high ideal of historical truth, and in judging men and things we have tried to place truth above all.

II. Geography: Assam is the north east frontier of the Indian sub-continent. Its geographical limit has varied from time to time. In the hands of a powerful ruler its area increased at the cost of the neighbouring territories, while it lost lands on the frontier during the rule of a weak ruler. But from another point of view the boundary of Assam has been permanently fixed by nature to retain its cultural identity. The unity of its history is the result of its geographical separation from the rest of India.

The Himalayan region of Bhutan and Tibet ~~are~~^{is} the northern boundary of Assam. To the north-east and the east lie the Mishmi hills, the Patkai Range and Manipur. The highland of Burma runs parallel with this boundary of the province. The Lushai hills and the Hill Tippera form its southern boundary while the western boundary-line touches the river Karatoya, according to the indigenous records. The great river Brahmaputra runs through the heart of the province, an extensive tract of territory being on either side. The central districts of Lakhimpur, Sibsagar, Nowgong, Darrang, Kamrup and Goalpara are watered by the life-giving Brahmaputra, which is the chief artery and highway of Assam. The history and culture of the province are intimately connected with it.

It is possessed of rivers in number and extent equal at least to those of any country in the world of the same size. The valley is intersected in its whole length by the great river Brahmaputra, from which it derives its name. The two parts thus divided are called Uttarkul and Dakshinkul or the north and south bank. These are the geographical

divisions of the country and at one time the river divided from each other distinct peoples and independent principalities and jurisdictions, until all were subdued under the powerful Ahoms. As far as natural scenery is concerned, Assam is unrivalled and perhaps the richest land in the World, "studded with numerous clumps of hills rising abruptly from the general level, and surrounded by lofty mountains, and intersected in all possible directions by innumerable streams and rivulets, which, issuing from the bordering mountains, at length empty themselves into the great channel of the Brahmaputra."¹

III. Land: The soil of Assam is exceedingly fertile and well adapted to all kinds of agricultural purposes. It is naturally a beautiful tract of country and enjoys all the advantages requisite for rendering it one of the finest under the Sun. Its plains are decked with a rich verdant robe, and washed with ^{the} water of numerous streams.

The land in Assam may in general be divided into three great classes according to the level of the water of the Brahmaputra.

The first division consists of the great mountain chains skirting from the north to the south together with their continuations and independent and isolated hills or hillocks. From the north-east to the north-west there are different offshoots of the Himalayas, the Mishmi hills, the Abor hills and the hills bordering Bhutan. The Garo hills, the Khasi hills and the branches of the Naga hills stretch through the southern boundary of Assam. There are hills lying in groups, large and small, on the plains of the

¹Robinson W. Descriptive Account of Assam, Calcutta, 1841, p-4.

Brahmaputra valley, sometimes isolated and sometimes continuations of the northern and southern ranges, the largest group of which is the Mikir hills, insulated from the southern mountains and covering an area from Sibsagar to Nowgong. The prolongations of the Khasi and Jaintia ranges touch the Brahmaputra valley at Gauhati. Other such continuations reach to Boko, Chaygaon and Palasbari as well as from Karaibari to Habraghat in Goalpara. A projection of the northern groups is marked on the north of Baliapara in Darrang. There are also some independent hill ranges in Darrang, Kamrup and Goalpara.

The second division of the lands is the diluvial plain of the valley, its level being generally above the ordinary inundation of the Brahmaputra or its tributaries. The breadth of this plain varies from place to place, depending to in great measure on the number and the height of the rocks or hills that protect the land from the devastating current of the great river. One of the projecting points is at Bisnath, above Tejpur, where the rocks rise to a height of about 30 ft. above the maximum flood level of the Brahmaputra. The low hills encircling Tejpur and Singri likewise prevent encroachment of the Brahmaputra upon the plains of Charduar and its western region. On the south bank the width of the diluvial plain is the greatest immediately east of the Dhansiri, at a distance of 30 miles from the Naga hills. Owing to the great projection to the north of the Mikir hills and the absence of rocks on the north bank, the river takes a northerly course forming a great plain on the south.

The alluvial deposits of the Brahmaputra and its tributaries comprise the third land division of the country. These tracts are very extensive, especially along the channel of the main river, and are of great elevation and fertility. They are subject to annual inundation and as a result are raised high by drift sand and deposits of vegetable matter brought down by the adjacent streams. The most typical of the alluvial plains is the vast land of Kajali in Nowgong, lying between the Brahmaputra and its tributary the Kalang. Another of almost equal extent is the Majuli island forming the northern border of Sibsagar. Besides these, there are numerous islands of smaller extent throughout the whole course of the Brahmaputra, which are liable to the destructive deviation of the great river. The alluvial tracts on the bank of the Barnadi and Manas can be classed in this category.

IV. People: The majority of the people of Assam are of Mongolian stock. A range of sub-Himalayan hills from the north-east to the north-west is inhabited by the people of Tibeto-Burman origin, the Mishmis, the Abors, the Miris, the Daflas and the Akas. The extreme north-eastern hills are inhabited by the Khanties and the Singphos while the Patkai range on the south-east has been permanently the abode of the aboriginal Nagas. Beginning from the extreme south-west the whole area covered by the Garo, the Khasi, the Jaintia, and the various branches of the Naga hills are inhabited by the peoples of the same names. Further south from the Naga land dwell the Manipuris.

The most important and numerous of the various Tibeto-Burman races of Assam are the Bodos. These include the Koches, the Meches, the Lalungs, the Dimasas, the Garos, the Rabhas, the Tripuras, the Chutias, the Morans and the Borahis. This stock claims to be the original inhabitants of Assam. Before the rise of the Ahoms, the Bodos controlled the political destiny of ancient Assam and constituted a synthetic culture over the region bordering the banks of the life-giving Brahmaputra.

In the beginning of the Thirteenth century, the Tais or Shans entered Assam through its north-eastern frontier. Among them the Ahoms were the most numerous and powerful and became the ~~a~~ ruling clan of Assam for the next six centuries. The other Shan tribes which accompanied them were the Phakials, the Naras, and the Aitonias, most of whom now inhabit the north-eastern extremity of Assam.

V. Political condition of Assam and its neighbouring states early in the Thirteenth century:

(i) Tibet: It is mentioned in the Tibetan records that on the death of Song-t-Sen Gampo in A.D. 650, the Chinese captured Lhasa. In the reign of Ti-song De-tsen, in the later half of the Eighth century, Tibet became one of the great military powers of Asia. In 763, the Tibetans captured ^{the} Chinese capital, Changan. Thus the boundary line of Tibet touched those of ^{the} Arabs and Turks across the Pamirs; Turkestan and Nepal seem to have been subject to her, while the victorious Tibetan armies overran the western part of China. At that time the Tibetans and the Nepalese were in the habit of invading some parts of North-Eastern India adjacent to them. At a later

time, the Bhutanese followed them in frequently raiding the frontiers of Bengal and Assam. They would carry off men, women, children and goods, and even a former Raja of Koch Behar was one of their victims.¹

(ii) Burma and the Shan kingdoms: Tai chronicles record that the Mao kingdom in the Seventh century, maintained itself with varying degrees of prosperity. By the beginning of the second millennium, there arose a line of very powerful rulers generally known as the Pagan monarchs in this part of South-East Asia. Anawrahta (1044-77), one of the powerful rulers of this line, gained ascendancy in much of the plain country, which until then were held by the Shans. He extended his sway over greater part of Burma and broke the northern Shan dominion, which had already disintegrated into a number of petty states, and subjugated country as far as Bhamo. Thaton and Pegu were taken and the Talaings and Arakan were reduced to subjection.² Anawrahta married a daughter of the Mao Shan king. Their next history is ~~one~~ of progress and prosperity.³

Narapatetsithu (1173-1210), the Pagan king, extended his sway over the Shan states from the border of China to Savoy. Toungoo was included in his empire. He reconstructed the city at Martan.⁴

In 1210, there was some sort of change in the succession, recorded in the Mong Mao chronicle, by what ^{is called} ~~called~~, "a third influx of Kunlung's posterity in the person of Chao-aimo-kam-neng, of the race of Maing-Kaing Maing-Nyaung."

¹Bell C. Tibet Past and Present, Oxford, 1924, pp.28-31.

²Hall D.G.E. A History of South-East Asia, London, 1955, pp.124-29.

³White H.T. Burma, Cambridge, 1922, pp.99-100.

⁴William P.C. An Outline History of Burma, St. Peters Institute Press, 1876, Intro. III-VI.

There followed two brothers Sao(or Hso) Hkan Hpa and Sam Long Hpa, who extended the limits of the Mao kingdom to the furthest point they ever reached. In 1225, Hso Hkan Hpa succeeded to the throne of the Mao Shans. The suzerainty of Hso Hkan Hpa was acknowledged as far as Moulmein in the south and to Keng-Hang on the east. His dominions were extended westwards by the overrunning of Arakan, the destruction of ~~its~~ capital and the invasion of Manipur. Assam was subjugated in 1228, and passed under the rule of the Shans, who were henceforth designated as Ahoms in this country. In 1253, Kublai Khan, the Mongol chief, made friendship with the Mao Shans to overthrow the Burman monarchy.¹

Both the Ahom and Burmese chronicles state that the Burmese used to raid Assam and Manipur, after perpetrating horrible cruelties, which are still remembered with a shudder, for they would burn, torture and slay. They brought back slaves, but did not administer any of these countries.²

(iii) China: By the beginning of the Thirteenth century, the Mongols established their power over the major portion of China. The original home of the Mongols was the region on the south-east of Lake Baikal. They are the descendants of the Huns. At the age of 13 years, Genghis or Jenhis, one of the greatest conquerors of the World, succeeded his father as the head of all the Mongols. By 1206, he subjugated the whole of Mongolia, declared himself the ruler of the Mongols and assumed the title 'Khan! Next he attacked and subdued Hsi Hsi in North China and drove out the Chins. In

¹Scott G. Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States, Vol. I. Pt. I. P-197.

²Jesse F.T. The story of Burma, London, 1946.

1214, he captured Peking. Next he conquered Korea, Khwarezm and the Caspian sea. He made treaties with Russia and forced tribute from the neighbouring states.¹ In 1216, he brought the whole of southern Manchuria under his control. In 1219, leaving to his subordinates the conquest of the Sung Empire, he went westward and in the succeeding years ravaged Central Asia, invaded India and sent his conquering army across Persia and Asia Minor. He conquered land in Europe up to the Danube and by occupying Novgorod, brought Russia under his subjection. In 1225, Genghis returned from India and in 1227, he died, leaving to his sons an empire that extended from the China Sea to the Danube and the Volga. Karakoram was their capital.²

(IV) India west of Assam: In 1192, on the victory of Muizuddin Muhammad at the battle of Taraori, the Turks and Afghans established their sway over whole of Northern India up to Delhi. Hansi, Samana, Ghuram and other Hindu kingdoms were gradually conquered by the Muslims. On the death of Qutb-ud-din Iqbal in 1210, Muhammadan supremacy was established from the Punjab, in the north to the Narmada river in the south, from Bengal in the east to the border of Sind in the west. Before his death in 1236, Iltutmish added Sind and Malwa to the Muslim empire of mediaeval Hindustan.³

In 1202, Ikhtiyar-Uddin ^{Bakhtiyar} marched from Bihar to Nadiya and dethroned Lakshman Sen, the ruler of Bengal. Then he established Muslim dominion over all the kingdom of Lakhnawati, which at that time was bounded roughly on the north by a north-easterly straight line from the modern town of

¹Nourse A. A short History of the Chinese, London, 1938, p-141.

²William E.T. A short History of China, Berkeley, 1928, p-170.

³C.R.I. V.III. p-46.

Purnea through Devkot to the town of Rangpur, on the east and the south-east by the rivers Tista and Karatoya, on the south by the main stream of the Ganges, and on the west by the lower course of the Kosi and from its mouth across the Ganges to the Rajmahal hill.¹ In 1206, Bakhtiyar started his fateful expedition to Tibet through the territory of the Kamrup king. But the expedition proved disastrous to his career and life.²

iv) Assam: It is mentioned in the Tabakat-i-Nasiri that by the beginning of the Thirteenth century, the river Bagmati (which appears to be ^{the} modern Karatoya), formed the western boundary of a state of considerable power and extent, under a monarch styled Kamesvar. The eastern boundary of the kingdom then comprised the territory covered by the modern districts of Darrang and Nowgong.³ On the east of it there was the valley of the Brahmaputra. At that time it was divided into several petty principalities. A line of the Chutia kings was holding the region north of the river Brahmaputra and the east of the Subansiri and the Disang. The tract south and south-east of it, was possessed by the several petty Bodo tribes.⁴ Further west there was the kingdom of the Kacharis, stretching south of the Brahmaputra across the Nowgong district. West of the Kacharis and the Chutias, there ~~were~~ the domains of a number of the Bhuyans covering both the banks of the Brahmaputra.⁵ They were the heads of the different tribes

¹H.B. p-12.

²T.N. p-561.

³Ibid.

⁴Dhekialphukan H. A.B. p-16.

⁵S.A.A. p-60.

by which the valley was then peopled. Some of them were very ambitious who conquered and absorbed the adjoining communities, and the kingdom thus formed would continue to exist until it crumbled owing to the weakness of their Successors.¹ The borders of the kingdoms of the Chutias and the Kacharis were occupied by some of the hill tribes, the Khantis, the Singphos and the Nagas.

VI. SOURCES: The sources for the history of mediaeval Assam have not yet been properly cultivated. Though we are in possession of voluminous Buranjis on the history of the Ahoms, the materials for the history of the other peoples of the period are as meagre as confused. History and myths, traditions and tales, facts and fictions are curiously inter-mingled to create great obscurity. The legendary accounts with which the beginning of the history of some of the peoples of our period is connected are as varied and conflicting as doubtful in their authenticity. The treatment of the disconnected data in order to construct a genuine framework of political history is a matter of great difficulty, and needs very careful handling.

Though a good number of the Buranjis are available for the detailed accounts of the Ahoms, their history has been neglected by most writers. The reason is their under-estimate in assessing the historical value of the Buranjis. Moreover, some writers depending much upon the foreign accounts and the superficial reports of outsiders, which narrate the history of Assam from a different point of view, have produced works neither reasonable nor convincing. "The Assamese are justly proud of their national literature. In no department have they been more successful than in a branch of study in which India is, as a rule, curiously deficient....

¹H.A. p.260.

. The chain of historical authenticity can be relied upon. These historical works or Buranjis as they are styled in Assam are numerous and voluminous."¹

The sources can be classified in many groups, such as contemporary and post-contemporary, indigenous and foreign, records and finds, original and supplementary, but for our own convenience, these may be put under the following heads: Literary, Archaeological and Foreign Accounts.

1. Literary Sources:

(i) Earliest Literature:

The earliest Assamese literature is unwritten and consisted of nursery songs, pastoral ballads sung by cowherds, songs of boatmen, songs describing the twelve months, songs for propitiation of the goddess of small-pox, wedding songs, and many types of folk songs such as Bihu Nams, Ai Nams and Dehabicharar g Gits. The mantras or incantations uttered to exorcize ghosts, to cure snake-bites, or perform feats of sorcery, as well as the wise sayings or aphorisms ascribed to^{the} philosopher Dak, belong to this category.

(ii) Ahom and Assamese Buranjis:

The word 'Buranji' is derived from the Ahom language. The literal meaning of it is "a store that teaches the ignorant" (Bu, 'ignorant persons' ran, 'teach' and ji, 'store' or 'granary'). The use of paper was unknown and the oblong strips of bark of the Saci tree were employed instead. The labour of preparing the bark and of inscribing the writing is considerable. These Buranjis are to the Assamese what the Bakhars are to the Marhattas, the Twarikhis to the Mughals and the Persians, the Yazawins or Rajawins to the Burmese and the P'ongsawadans to the Siamese. The older of these

¹Grierson, L.S.I.V.I. Pt.I. Intro. p-156.

Buranjis are considered more important than the new^{er} ones. These are ~~very~~ ~~are~~ very carefully preserved, wrapped up in pieces of cloth and are handed down as heirlooms from generation to generation. Many of them are black with age and the writings have almost disappeared. The subjects dealt with are various but ^{the}majority of them are historical in character. Some incorporate the method of divination in use amongst the Ahom⁴ Deodhais and Bailungs (non-Brahman priests). Others again are religious in nature, while a few contain interesting specimens of popular folklore.

In its unique wealth of historical and quasi-historical manuscripts, Assamese literature appears to be the richest amongst the vernacular literatures of India. There are few families of note in Assam which do not possess a family history of their own. About 150 Buranjis have so far been discovered.¹ Besides these there are many more in the possession of ancient families. A large number of these Puthis and Buranjis were destroyed during the Burmese invasion and the Moamaria insurrection, a large number again are annually being destroyed by flood and fire and other natural causes. By far the greatest destruction of these documents must be laid at the door of Kirti Chandra, one of the chief executive officers of the middle of ^{the} Eighteenth century. He discovered that one amongst them threw doubt on the purity of his descent. With the help of the ruling king, the officer ~~xx~~ caused all those Buranjis to be destroyed which, on examination, were found to record facts reflecting on those in power and their near ancestors.²

¹Bhuyan S.K. Assamese Historical Literature, Calcutta, 1929, p-16.

²Studies in Early Assamese Literature, Barua B.K. Nowgong, 1953, pp-68-71.

The number of the Buranjis still in existence is considerable, and properly preserved and published must afford valuable materials for an exhaustive and comprehensive history of Assam.

The disrepute into which the mediaeval Indian Hindus (with the exception of the Kashmiris) have fallen for their failure to maintain historical records does not apply to the Ahoms. These people were endowed with the historical faculty in a very high degree. When they invaded Assam at the beginning of the Thirteenth century, they were already in possession of a written character and a literature of their own. Their priests and leading families possessed Buranjis which were periodically brought up to date.¹ They have given us a detailed and full account of their rule, from the very beginning of their advent in Assam. The maintenance of family records is common even in an ordinary Assamese family, and it is deemed indispensable on the part of every Assamese to possess a good knowledge of the Buranjis. These constitute a glorious and unprecedented chapter in the literature of Assam.

The Buranjis were compiled under the orders of the kings and the supervision of the higher government officials, who were given free access to all the necessary state papers. These were principally the periodical reports submitted to the court by the frontier governors and military commanders, ~~the~~ diplomatic correspondence sent to and received from foreign rulers and allies, papers submitted to the king's ministers for final orders on revenue and judicial matters, the day-to-day annals of the court

¹ Bhuyan S.K. Studies in the literature of Assam, Gauhati, 1956, pp-25-26.

which incorporates all the transactions done, important utterances made and significant occurrences reported by eye-witnesses.¹ They are the close embodiment of the descriptions and narratives of the affairs of the royal families and give an exact representation of manners and customs of the people of the time. Many of them produce a vivid picture of the court life of the Ahom rulers, the royal routine, and the every-day relations of the court with the outsiders of all kinds. Some of them contain amorous intrigues and courtly romances, idylls of pastoral life, out-bursts of valour and patriotism, critical analysis of complex political situations and epic descriptions of war and triumph.²

The compilation of the Buranjis was considered a sacred task, and therefore, it was customary to begin it with a salutation to God. There was a group of scribes attached to the secretariat under an officer called Likhakar Barua or superintendent of the department of writers.³ The nobles and the chiefs of the state themselves, or scribes under their immediate supervision, used to compile the Buranjis. They were also compiled by private scholars with the help of other existing chronicles and materials collected by them. A set of apartments was maintained in the Ahom palace to preserve the Buranjis along with other records, letters, despatches, and maps, in charge of a high official named Gandhia Barua.⁴ The chroniclers were generally men of letters who were possessed of comprehensive knowledge on statecraft. Copies of these Buranjis were taken

¹Barua B.K. Aspects of Early Assamese Literature, Gauhati, 1953, pp-133-34.

²Bhuyan S.K. Assamese Historical Literature, Calcutta, 1929, pp-15-16.

³Bhuyan S.K. Studies in Early Assamese Literature, Gauhati, 1956, pp-68-69.

⁴ Ibid. p-53.

by persons who wanted to preserve them in their archives. As a result every family of distinction managed to have a Buranji in its own possession.

Foul deeds as well as good ones were equally recorded in all their particulars. Neither the king nor his nobles were spared if they ever had done anything wicked. The knowledge of the Buranjis became an indispensable factor in the cultural life of the Assamese people. It formed a part of training given to the princes and the children of the nobles. The Buranjis were recited in royal marriages. It was further believed that the future could be ascertained by consulting some of them. All this finally tended to convert the secular Buranjis into religious scriptures.¹

The earliest Buranjis were written in the Ahom language, but, with the conversion of the Ahoms to Hinduism, Assamese succeeded Ahom as the language of the Buranjis. The earlier ones written in the old tribal language were akin to other Shan chronicles and their character seem to have derived from the Pali, ^{script of Burma}. The access to these remote chronicles is now limited to a few old men of the Deodhai or priestly class. After the Hinduisation of the Ahoms, the tribal priests gradually fell into disrepute and, though they long resisted the influence of Brahmanism, at last have given way by their own conversion to the orthodox Gohains. As a result the Assamese language became the state-language in place of the Ahom.²

The language of the Buranjis is simple, clear and straightforward. Having been ^{compared as} the records of concrete facts, they are generally written in a language free from literary limitations. The writers are expert in

¹Bhuyan S.K. Assamese Historical Literature, Calcutta, 1929, pp-9-10.

²Barua B.K. Studies in Early Assamese Literature, Nowgong, 1953, p-68.

expressing themselves in short sentences and simple phraseology. Their contribution to the Assamese language is important. A large number of administrative terms and legal expressions are incorporated in them from the Ahom language. Those terms are introduced to denote the things and institutions intimately related with Ahom life and culture. Words of Arabic and Persian origin are also found in the literature of the Buranjis, especially in their diplomatic aspects. As to the literary flavour of the Buranjis, Bhuyan remarks that "the historical narrative is not dry bone. One notices in it thought and emotion too. Hence it ascends to the level of pure literature. It will not be too much to say that such a confluence of history and literature is not to be found in any modern Indian literature in the pre-British period. What would otherwise be a dry historical narrative, has, in the hands of the writer, become an entertaining historical literature punctuated to the reader's satisfaction by such elements of style as simile, analogy, illustrations, episodes and diversions."¹

The date of the compilation of the Buranjis has not yet been definitely ascertained. Some scholars are of opinion that these were compiled over a long period, beginning from the late Sixteenth to the early Nineteenth century.² But we have already seen that the chronicles of the Ahom kings were maintained from the very early period of their rule in Assam, as is revealed from the command of Sukapha that "the Pandits should unite down all particulars, whenever an incident takes place, when a person dies and when we acquire new followers."³ Moreover, the Shans and other peoples akin

¹Kakati B.K. Aspects of Early Assamese literature, Gauhati, 1953, p-135.

²Ibid. Barua B.K. Early Assamese Prose, p-133.

³D.A.B. p-90.

to the Ahoms are known to have been already in possession of historical literature at this time. The political instincts which inspired the Ahoms to record the chief events of the reign in the Buranjis, and conferred upon the Assamese the unique distinction of possessing historical masterpieces in prose, can thus be traced from the beginning of the Thirteenth century. Some of the Buranjis record the events from A.D. 568, when the ancestors of the Ahom kings are said to have descended from heaven. The earlier portion of these are generally devoid of historical significance, containing unreliable and unreasonable facts, but from the invasion of Sukapha in the beginning of the Thirteenth century, they can be treated as valuable and trustworthy historical records.

The historicity of the Buranjis has been proved not only by the way in which they support each other, but also by the confirmation which is afforded by the narratives of Muhammadan writers, wherever these are available for comparison. Their chronology is further supported by other dated records, the coins, copper-plates, rock and temple-inscriptions^{and inscriptions}, on cannon. We have ourselves found further confirmation of the correctness of Ahom chronology from the reference to an eclipse of the Sun, hitherto unnoticed, the date of which has received astronomical corroboration.¹

From the beginning of the rule of Sukapha to the accession of Sukhampha in 1552, there is almost complete agreement in the matter of dates between the printed accounts of Kasinath, Robinson and Gunabhiram and other Buranjis. But for the later period up to the end of the Ahom rule, there is lack of

¹See below pp. 59, 81, 283.

conformity between the various Buranjis. From the death of Jayadhvaj Singha in 1663, they again agree, but the dates of the intermediate kings, Pratap Singha, Bhaga Raja and Naria Raja, differ by several years in each case. According to Kasinath, from whom Robinson and Gunabhiram appear to have gathered information, Sukhampha died after a reign of 59 years and was succeeded in 1611 by Pratap Singha, who was followed by Bhaga Raja in 1649, Naria Raja in 1652, and Jayadhvaj Singha in 1654.¹ Other Buranjis, on the other hand, agree in ascribing to Sukhampha a reign of 51 years only, and place his death and Pratap Singha's accession in 1603, the accession of Bhaga Raja in 1643, that of Naria Raja in 1646, and that of Jayadhvaj Singha in 1650.² It is more likely that Kasinath made a mistake than that he should have had access to records contrary in contents to the surviving Buranjis. Other than this the various historical traditions of Assam contain no serious chronological discrepancies. Again, the Buranjis are very accurate in all the dates which can be tested by reference to the Persian sources. The dates of the battles between the Ahoms and the Muhammadans in 1615, 1637 and 1662, confirm the correct dating of the Buranjis when they are compared with the Muslim chronicles. Almost all the Buranjis give a detailed description of each reign and events are recorded for almost every year of each reign, and the month and day of the month are also regularly noted. If the dates of accession were incorrect, all these dependent dates would also have to be rejected. In case of Sukhampha's reign, we must note that if he did not die until 1611, according to the tradition based on Kasinath, he must have

¹ Tamuliphukan K.N. A.B. pp-24, 27, 35, 37.

² Barua G.C. A.H.B. pp-95, 127, 129, 142.

reigned for 59 years, but this seems too long a period for an Ahom king, whose average duration of reign is one-fourth of it. Thus the general tradition of the Buranjis appears to be justified in ascribing to him a reign of only 51 years.

Review of the Buranjis:

From a thorough review of the available Buranjis, it appears that the authors have used almost the same sources. Their literary style, the subject matter dealt with, and the language and the treatment of the subject, show close similarity. Being the summary of the same events, the Buranjis are mutually corroborative and supplementary. Inaccuracies and mis-statements are rare except those caused by scribal ignorance or carelessness.

(1) Ahom Buranji: Among the surviving Buranjis written in the Ahom language, we have only one ~~at~~ our disposal, the Ahom Buranji. This is edited and translated into English by G.C. Barua, at Calcutta, in 1930. This is a complete Buranji of the Ahom kings from the earliest time down to the reign of ~~Purandar~~ ⁽¹⁸³²⁻¹⁸³⁸⁾ Kamalavar Singha ~~(1795-1810)~~. It contains a detailed account of the wars of the Ahoms with the Chutias, the Kacharis, the Koches, the Nagas and other tribes, and present an exhaustive account of the various Muhammadan invasions and of the troubles caused by the Burmese and the Moamarias. Its dates appear to be accurate. The date of the final compilation of this text must have been in the first half of the Nineteenth century, but its author evidently had access to very early materials.

(2) Assam Buranji: In 1829, H.R.Dhekialphukan published his 'Assam Buranji' in Bengali at Calcutta. It is one of the most conclusive and exhaustive account of Assam. The dates mentioned in this Buranji are not all correct. It is divided into four parts. The first part describes the history of Assam from the remote period to the beginning of the British rule. The second part gives the accounts of the administration, the land tenure, the judicial system and the local and central government of the Ahoms. The third chapter incorporates the geography, land, river, mountain, population, revenue system and the descriptions of the religious places of Assam. The fourth chapter presents a picture of the cast-system, agriculture, religion and the trade and commerce of the country. This work was originally written in Assamese, and translated for publication into Bengali by B.C.Bhattacharyya. The author had some idea of western method of history, and his Buranji differs from these of the traditional type, by virtue of its sections on administration and trade. Dhekialphukan had been a descendant of the old Ahom nobility and his account of the administration of Assam immediately before British occupation is most valuable.

~~(3) Assam Buranji: In 1844, K.N.Tamuliphukan published an 'Assam Buranji' at Sibsagar, under the patronage of the Ahom king Purandar Singha. It is mainly based on the earlier Buranjis and describes the history of the Ahoms from the earliest time to the British occupation of Assam in 1826. It appears to be sketchy in comparison with the Ahom Buranji. Later on this Buranji was enlarged by H.K.Barua Sadaramin.¹~~

(3) Assam Buranji: In 1844, K.N.Tamuliphukan published an 'Assam Buranji' at Sibsagar, under the patronage of the Ahom king Purandar Singha. It is mainly based on the earlier Buranjis and describes the history of the Ahoms from the earliest time to the British occupation of Assam in 1826. It appears to be sketchy in comparison with the Ahom Buranji. Later on this Buranji was enlarged by H.K.Barua Sadaramin.¹

¹A.B. Calcutta, 1906.

(4) Chutia Buranji: In 1850, Robinson found a 'Chutia Buranji' in possession of a Chutia and published it in the Arunodai, an Assamese magazine. It describes the history of the Chutias from A.D. 1189, to the dismemberment of their kingdom in the Sixteenth century. The names of the kings are chronologically arranged and the dates are mentioned in the Saka Era.

(5) Assam Buranji: In 1876, Gunabhiram Barua published his 'Assam Buranji' at Calcutta. It describes the history of Assam from the earliest time to 1875. It is the most detailed and systematic of all the Buranjis but some of its dates are found to be incorrect. Besides the political history of all the dynasties of Assam, it gives notices of the castes, language, religion, commerce, agriculture, arts and social customs of the people and the internal government of the province.

(6) Assam Buranji: In 1938, S.K. Dutta published an 'Assam Buranji' at Gauhati, based on a newly discovered manuscript of the Eighteenth century. It differs from the other Buranjis in describing only the period 1648-81, and especially the dynastic strife following on Mir Jumla's invasion. In a sense, this is only an account of intrigues and revolutions, chaos and uncertainty. It describes the events of some of the reigns month by month.

(7) Purani Assam Buranji: In 1922, H.C. Goswami edited 'Purani Assam Buranji' at Gauhati. This appears to be the earliest of all the Buranjis written in the Assamese language. The editor suggests that the work was compiled in the reign of Gadadhar Singha (1681-95). The edition is taken from a single prose manuscript on ~~the~~ Sachi bark. It supplies a more elaborate account of the reigns of the Dihingia Raja, Burha Raja and Chakradhvaj

Singha. The account\$ of the reigns of the other kings is meagre. The account of the Muhammadan invasions given in this Buranji agrees generally with that contained in the Ahom Buranji.

The greatest credit for the publication of the Buranjis, goes to Dr. S.K. Bhuyan. The scholar is well known for his various literary activities. His contribution on the history of Assam can hardly be over-estimated. Of his edited Buranjis, we have used the following:

(8) Kamrupar Buranji: This Buranji was published in 1930, by the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Assam. It is a compilation from several original sources. The language of the Buranji is Assamese but a curious admixture of Persian and Hindi words are incorporated in it. It deals with the conflicts of the Mughals with Koch Behar and Assam, commencing from the visit of the rival Koch princes, Parikshit and Lakshmi Narayan, at the beginning of the Seventeenth century, to the court of Emperor Jahangir, soliciting the Emperor's intervention in their claims to the throne. The Muhammadan wars of Assam during the reigns of the Ahom kings, Pratap Singha, Jayadhvaj Singha, Chakradhvaj Singha and Gadadhar Singha are narrated in full, giving prominence to the campaigns of Allah Yar Khan, Satrajit, Mirza Nathan, Mir Jumla, Ram Singha and Mansur Khan. The chronicle ends with the accession of Gadadhar Singha in 1681, and the defeat of the Mughal army under the Nawab Mansur Khan in the battle of Itakhuli in 1682, which saw the termination of long hostilities between the Mughals and the Assamese, though they were revived in a certain extent during the reign of Rudra Singha, who resented the humiliating overtures of Murshid Quli Khan, Governor of Bengal. Three

appendices are added giving the history and topography of Kamrup, and her legendary Hindu kings, and the narrative is ended with the invasion of Assam by Mir Jumla.

(9) Deodhai Assam Buranji: published in 1932, by the Department of Historical and Antiquarian studies, Assam. It was compiled from a number of old chronicles. These constituent chronicles represent different types of Assamese historical literature. The language of this Buranji is pure old Assamese but the influence of original Ahom Buranji is seen in the retention of the Ahom nomenclature and the use of the Ahom Laklis or years of the Shan Aijepi era in place of the saka era. It describes the Ahom History from the descent of Khunlung and Khunlai in A.D. 568, to the death of Sutyingpha Naria Raja in 1648. The text incorporates narratives from the family Buranjis, Bahgafia Buragohair Buranji and Dativalia Buranji. It also gives the detailed account of the Ahom royal marriages, Ahom royal recreations, burial of the Ahom kings, official function of the Astrologers, origin of the Koch kings, origin of the Jayantia kings, origin of the Chutia kings, origin of the Naras, relation between Nara and Mantara and the history of the Mikirs.

(10) Asamar Padya Buranji: This Buranji was edited from Duti Ram Hajarika's 'Kali-bharat Buranji' and Bisvesvar Vaidyadhipa's 'Belimarar Buranji', in 1932, at Gauhati. The first gives the history of Assam from the accession of Sulikpha or Ratnadhvaj Singha (Lora Raja), in 1679, to the transfer of the territories of the Honourable East India Company to the crown in 1858; and the second from Captain Welsh's expedition of Assam in 1792, to the

victory of the Burman army at Khagarjan (Nowgong) in 1819. Both these books were compiled, directly or indirectly, at the instance of Maharaja Purandar Singha, king of Assam from 1817-18, during the period of Burmese invasion, and feudatory chief of Upper Assam under British protection from 1833-38. It is a metrical chronicle which represents a distinct and numerous branch of Assamese historical literature. It deals elaborately the reigns of the Tungkhungia kings and the author continues his account up to the execution of Mani Ram Dewan in 1858. An introductory chapter is devoted to Sulikpha Lora Raja during whose reign the Tungkhungia dynasty first attained ascendancy and power.

(11) Tungkhungia Buranji: This Buranji was edited from the Assamese chronicle of Srinath Duara Barbarua in 1933, at Calcutta. This is a chronicle of the last dynasty of the Ahom kings, the Tungkhungias, which was in power for 145 years from 1681-1826. The dynasty has derived its name from the village Tungkhung or Tingkhang, in upper Assam where they had their ancestral residence. It describes in detail the events of the reign of Gadadhar Singha, Rudra Singha, Sib Singha, Pramatta Singha, Rajesvar Singha, Lakshmi Singha, Gaurinath Singha, Kamalesvar Singha and Chandra Kanta Singha. It incorporates the account of Gadadhar Singha's recovery of western Assam which terminated the long-drawn hostilities between the Ahoms and the Mughals. An exhaustive account of ^{the} Moamaria insurrection and the Burmese invasion of Assam is also narrated in it.

(12) Padshah Buranji: This was edited at Gauhati in 1935. This presents an unexplored field of materials for the historians of mediaeval India. It was

compiled in the Seventeenth century, when Assam was frequently invaded by the Mughals. Its primary object was to acquaint the Assamese people with the history and manners of the invaders, an intimate knowledge of which was essential to encounter the enemy. It is an anonymous work and the author gathered materials from the reports of reliable witnesses as well as written records. There is only one date mentioned and the chronology is maintained by reference to the reigns of successive rulers.

The language of the book is Assamese, but, unlike other Buranjis, there is a large admixture of words of Arabic and Persian origin. The chronicle shows a sound knowledge on the part of its author of the traditions and customs of the Muhammadan world, which suggests that he was either a Muhammadan scholar or a Hindu ambassador who visited Mughal courts in connection with the numerous embassies and diplomatic missions.

The Buranji deals with the establishment of the Muhammadan supremacy in India after the defeat of Pithor Raja by Qutbuddin Aibak, called Rungaddin in our chronicle. The conqueror introduces reforms into the system of administration. The army is properly organised on the Mansabdari system. During the reign of his successors Timur invaded the country. The history of Babar, Humayun, Sher Shah and Akbar is properly discussed. The reign of Jahangir and his conquest of Secunderabad are exhaustively recorded. The accounts of the various events of the reign of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb are also duly dealt with. Mir Jumla's marches against Koch Behar and Assam are clearly mentioned. A chapter is devoted on the Nawabs of Dacca. The careers of three Rajas, Man Singh, Mirza Jaya Simha and Ram Simha of Amber

are described in full. Jaya Simha subjugates eastern India and the Raja of Koch Behar agrees to pay a tribute of one lakh of rupees to the Delhi Emperor.

(13) Kachari Buranji: published in 1936, by the department of Historical and Antiquarian studies, Assam. This was reproduced from an old manuscript chronicle and deals exclusively with Ahom-Kachari relations from the end of the Fourteenth century to the beginning of the Eighteenth. The prefatory portion of the chronicle embodies an account of the legendary origin of the Rajas of Cachar, connecting them with the earliest Kachari monarchs recorded in history. The extent and jurisdiction of the Kachari kingdom having changed from age to age, we get glimpses of the earlier settlements of the Kacharis and the different centres of their government till a powerful section of them established a new capital at Dimapur and then at Maibong and Khaspur. The transfer of the capital was due to the pressure upon the Kachari monarchs by their powerful neighbours and rivals, the Ahoms.

(14) Jayantia Buranji: published in 1937, by the Department of Historical and Antiquarian studies, Assam. The text has been collated from a number of manuscripts of varying dates. This chronicle specially emphasizes the political relations of the Ahom government with other states. It gives the account of various political events as well as the social manners and customs of the time. Though meagre it supplies information which is essential to reconstruct the history of the ancient kingdom of Jayantia.

(15) Tripura Buranji: published in 1938, by the department of Historical and Antiquarian studies, Assam. This was reproduced from an old manuscript written in 1724, by Ratna Kandali Sarma Kataki and Arjundas Bairagi

Kataki, who had visited the court of the Tripura king as agents of king Rudra Singha on three different occasions between the years 1709-1715.

The chronicle derives its importance principally from the circumstances in which it was compiled, the revelations which it contains of the pan-Indian interests of the Ahom monarch Rudra Singha, and the mass of information which it presents about the history, topography and customs of Tripura.

(16) Assam Buranji: published in 1945, by the Department of Historical and Antiquarian studies, Assam. This was reproduced from a manuscript chronicle obtained in 1912. The title of the Buranji is given in the original manuscript is "Sri Sri Svarga Narayan Deva Maharajar Janna Charitra" which literally means 'an account of the birth of Maharaja Svarga Narayan Deva'. The chronicle is divided into four sections. The first section deals with the origin of the Ahom rulers from the period prior to their advent to Assam, up to the reign of Gadadhar Singha. The second section gives the account of the origin of the several Ahom families of eminence, counsellors and camp-followers of Sukapha. The third section narrates the history of the origin of the rulers of the Naras, Mantaras, Kacharis, Jayantias and Chutias. The fourth section enumerates the hills in Gauhati and its neighbourhood, the list of which was compiled under the order of king Rudra Singha from the Yogini Tantra. The relative distances of these sacred hills are also given, making their respective names unalterable and fixed for all ages!

(iii) Assamese Puthis and Vamsavalis:

Every old Assamese family is in possession of a Vamsavali or genealogical history. This represents the sketches of life and career of the family's ancestors. Thus Vamsavalis supply information which is not found in the Buranjis. Like the Buranjis many of the Vamsavalis have not yet seen the light of day, but still remain buried in family archives. These are the supplementary fragments of regular history, and the future historians of Assam will have to explore them as their materials.¹

Review of the Puthis and Vamsavalis:

(1) Darrangrajvamsavali: This was first published by Gait in J.A.S.B. 1893. In 1917, H.C. Goswami edited it in Calcutta from an Assamese Puthi. This narrates the family history of the Darrang Rajas, one of the branches of the Koch kings of Assam, and gives an accurate and comprehensive account of the rise of the Koch power in the west and its gradual expansion in the east and the consolidation of a large and powerful kingdom comprising western Assam and a large part of north and eastern Bengal. Apart from the political history of the Koches, it incorporates vigorous descriptions of the victorious expeditions of Sukladhvaj or Chila Rai, and of the construction of the Kamakhya temple on the Nilachal hill under the order of Nara Narayan, the Koch king. It also narrates at length, how this power was dismembered by the Ahoms on the one hand and the Muhammadans on the other, after the death of Nara Narayan and his worthy brother Chila Rai, and how the royal house was divided into two branches, the eastern and the western. This is the most comprehensive account of the Koch supremacy in Assam.

¹ Bhuyan S.K. Studies in the Literature of Assam, Gauhati, pp-55-56.
1956

(2) Hara Gauri Bilas: This Puthi ~~was~~ published by Gait in his Report on the Progress of Historical Research in Assam, in 1897, at Shillong. It was written by Lalit Ram Singha in Assamese in 1265 of the Bengali Era, (A.D. 1856). The book is of purely mythological nature and treats chiefly the marriage of Hara with Gauri. The book contains a passage, which describes that Kanrup comprising Ratnapitha, Bhadrapitha, Saumarapitha and Kamapitha, was given to Durga as her dowry. The author claims^{to} be descended from Narakasur and gives a genealogy of his family.

(3) Bhuyar Puthi: This was published by Gait in 1897, in his Report on the Progress of Historical ~~and Archaeological~~ Research in Assam, at Shillong. This describes the history of the Bhuyans, their origin, consolidation and capital at Ratnapur, in Majuli.

(4) Adi Charitra: This was published by M.N. Bhattacharyya, in 1927, at Shillong. It was written by Madhav Dev in A.D. 1664, in metrical Assamese. It is mentioned that from the day the king of Saumara, after defeating the Chutias and the Kacharis, obtained Ratnapur, the country came to be known as 'Asam' and the kings of the race of Indra (Ahoms) were similarly designated.

As well as the Buranjis, Puthis and Vamsavalis mentioned above, there are many others which have not been published. It is clear that Sir Edward Gait had access to numerous sources which are not available in England, but unfortunately he does not regularly mention them in the course of his history. Thus his work contains here and there statements which cannot be traced to any of the published texts and for which Gait gives no reference. We have been forced to ~~this~~ use this material, but have done so with due caution.

II. Archaeological Sources:

(i) Coins: Numismatic evidence is one of the most reliable sources for the study of the mediaeval history of Assam. There exist coins of the Ahoms, Kacharis, Koches and Jayantias of the period under review which much help us to fix the chronology of the kings of the above kingdoms.

(1) Ahom coins: Only one coin of the Ahom kings of our period has so far been discovered. This is a coin of Suklenmung(1539-52), who appears to have first minted coins. It was issued in the year 1544 . It is octagonal in shape and the legend is in Ahom language and script. The reading is as follows:
Obverse: Chaopha Suklenmun pin sao lakni plekni, i.e., the great king Suklen reign year 15th year of cycle.

Reverse: Kao bay pha tara heu cu, i.e., I the king offer prayer to Tara.

(2) Kachari coins: There were purchased at Haflong five silver coins ~~probably~~ issued by the Kachari king~~s~~, Yasanarayandeva(1583-1610), ~~and his successors~~. The legends describe the issuer~~s~~ as the devotee~~s~~ of Hara and Gauri. Two coins of Nara Narayan ~~s~~(1610-....) have also been discovered. These are ^{made} ~~of~~ of debased silver. The reverse of one of the coins of Yasanarayansdeva states the date A.D.1583. The obverse runs thus: Sri Sri Siva charanakamala madhukarasya Hara Gauri charanaparayana Hacheng~~sa~~ vamsa.

(3) Koch coins:

A few coins of king Nara Narayan have been found in the Garo Hills, which are dated Saka 1477(1555 A.D.). The reading is as follows:

Obverse: Sri Sri mat Naranarayanasya Saka.....

Reverse: Sri Sri Siva charanakamalamadhukarasya.

(of the auspicious Nara Narayana Saka..... of the bee in the lotus which is the feet of Siva).

Coins of Raghudev:

Raghudev came to the throne of the eastern Koches in A.D.1583. One of his coins has been discovered which gives the date A.D.1588. So the coin was minted 5 years after his accession. Its reading:

Obverse: Sri Sri Raghudeva Narayana Palasya Saka 1510(A.D.1588).

Reverse: Sri Sri Hara Gauri charanakamalamadhukarasya.

(Of the auspicious Raghudeva Narayan Pala Saka 1510.

Of the bee in the lotus, which is the feet of Hara and Gauri).

(4) Jayantia Coins:

Some anonymous coins of the Jayantia kingdom have been found. These must have been issued after the Koch invasion of the kingdom in the middle of the Sixteenth century. After defeating the Jayantia ruler, Nara Narayan the Koch king permitted the former to strike coins only in the name of his kingdom.

Their reading is as follows:

Reverse: Four lined legend in circle with broad dotted margin:

Sri Sri Sri Jayantapura Purandarasya¹ Saka 1630 (A.D.1708). (Coins of the king of Jayantapura of Saka 1630). There is a horizontal line above the date.

Reverse: Four lined legend in circle with broad dotted margin:

Sri Sri Sri Siva charana kamala madhukarasya Saka 1630. (Coin of the king of Jayantapura, a bee on the lotus of the feet of Siva, Saka 1630). Crescent in upper margin; six pointed star at the end of the legend.

¹ A title of Indra, not proper name of the ruling king.

(ii) Epigraphic Sources:

The local epigraphs are one of the means which help to construct a systematic history of mediaeval Assam. There are only one Bhuyan and two Koch inscriptions of our period available for study. They record the donation of land, the achievements of the rulers, and facts of historical significance. Their dates confirm the chronology mentioned in the chronicles. Unfortunately we are not in possession of any epigraphic evidence of the Ahom rulers of our period.

(1) Koch Inscriptions: One of these inscriptions is inside the Kamakhya temple. It runs as follows:

"Glory to the king Malladeva, who by virtue of his mercy, is kind to the people; who in archery is like Arjuna, and in charity like Dadhichi and Karna; he is like an ocean of all goodness, and he is versed in many Sastras; his character is excellent, in beauty he is as bright as Kandarpa; he is a worshipper of Kamakhya. His younger brother Sukladeva built this temple of bright stone on the Nila Hillock, for the worship of the Goddess Durga, in 1487 Saka (A.D.1565). His beloved brother Sukladhvaj again, with universal fame, the crown of the greatest heroes, who like the fabulous Kalpatree, gave all that was devoutly asked of him, the chief of all the devotees of the Goddess, constructed this beautiful temple with heaps of stones on the Nila Hill in 1487 Saka."¹

The other Koch inscription is inside the temple of Hayagriva. It reads thus:

¹J.A.S.B. 1893,p-295.

"There was a ruler of the earth named Visva Simha; his illustrious son, the most wise king Malladeva, was a conqueror of all enemies. In gravity and liberality and for heroism he had a great reputation, and he was purified by religious deeds. After him was born his brother Sukladvaja who subdued many countries. The son of this Sukladvaja was king Raghudeva, who was like the greatest man of the Raghu race; his glories spread out in all directions; the lord of Kamrupa in obedience to the order of destiny, is the slayer of the wicked, and was like water to the flames of the fire of sorrow of the vast populace. Of the seed of Sukladvaja, a king was born of the name of Raghudeva, who consoles innumerable persons, and is a worshipper of the feet of Krishna; the king coming of age had a temple built on the hillock called Mani Hillock, in Saka 1505 (A.D.1583). The most skilful and efficient artisan Sridhara himself built it."¹

(2) Bhuyan Land-grant:

Purusottamadasa, a Bhuyan, issued ^{the} Rautkuchi land-grant in A.D. 1329, near Vaidyargarh in Kamrup. Its preamble runs thus:

"In the Sandilya Gotra, there was born Vasudeva, who resembled the preceptor of the Gods, who was devoted to the Brahmans, was the ocean of all good qualities and the foremost of noble Sudras. A thousand swordsmen always marched before him and he was the right hand of the king, and his enemies had their residence in heaven. The famous Jayadevadasa, who was the lotus of his own race and who possessed the characteristic qualities of the Aryan and was adorned with many noble qualities, derived his being from him.

¹J.A.S.B. XX 1893, pp-295-96.

What am I to say about the wealth of his virtue? From him was born the illustrious Purusottama who on account of his great wealth was matchless and was like the Kalpatree on earth. By dint of the valour of his arms and heroism he had defeated the rival kings and obtained the glory of sovereignty. How am I to sing his glory? He was the path of sound intelligence and the boat of valour; he was like a boat in the sea of obstruction and the gem decorating the neck of the Goddess Lakshmi and the gem Syamantaka; to the host of suitors, he was the gem that yields every desired object."¹

(iii) Foreign Accounts:

(1) Akbarnamah- Shaikh Abul Fazl Allami,

This is a Persian text and has been translated into English in ^{the} Bibliotheca Indica Series. H. Beveridge has also translated it into English in three volumes, in the History of India, by Elliot and Dowson, London, 1877. We have utilised it in writing the history of the Koches.

(2) Alamgirnamah- Mirza Muhammad Kazim.

This is a Persian work and has been translated into English in ^{the} Bibliotheca Indica Series. We have used it in writing the history of Kamrup. The detail ^{ed} history of Koch Behar and the invasion of Assam by Mir Jumla are narrated in it. A part of this book has been translated in ^{the} History of India, by Elliot and Dowson, Vol. VII.

(3) Baharistan-i-ghaibi- Mirza Nathan Alau-d-din Ispahani.

This is a Persian text and has been translated into English by M.I. Borah in 2 Vols. at Gauhati, in 1936. It is very useful for the history of the Koches and the Ahoms of mediaeval Assam. This work closely corroborates the

¹S.H.K. Vol. I. p-247.
~~Burhanig.~~

Buranjis.

(4) Fathiya-i-Ibrya- Shihabud-din Talish.

This is a Persian text and has been translated into English by Blochmann in J.A.S.B., 1872. Prof. J.N.Sarkar has also translated this work in J.B.O.R.S Vol.I. 1915. It describes a picture of Assam and its people about the year, 1662 and narrates the history of Bengal from Mir Jumla's death to the conquest of Chittagong by Shaista Khan. It also incorporates an account of Koch-Mughal affairs during Shaista Khan's vice-royalty in Bengal.

(5) Padshahnamah- Abdul Hamid Lahori.

This is a Persian text and has been translated into English in ^{the} Bibliotheca Indica Series, in two volumes. Blochmann's analysis in J.A.S.B., 1872, appears to be faulty. Extracts from this work are also to be found in the History of India, by Elliot and Dowson, Vol. VII. We have utilised this work in connection ^{with} the history of the Ahom~~x~~ kingdom and Kamatapur.

(6) Riyaz-us-Salatin- Abdus Salam.

This is a Persian text and was written in A.D. 1787-88. It has been translated into English in ^{the} Bibliotheca Indica Series. Another translation of it has been incorporated into the History of India, of Elliot and Dowson. J.B.O.R.S., Vol. VII, 1921, also presents a translation. It narrates the political relation of the Mughal vice-roys of Bengal with the Koches and the Ahoms. It is deficient in dates.

(7) Tabakat-i-Nasiri- Minhaju-s Siraj.

This is a Persian text and has been translated into English by

Raverty (London, 1881). A translation of this work also appears in the history of India, of Elliot and Dowson, Vol. II. This is the most important source for the history and chronology of mediaeval Kamrup and its rulers respectively
 (8) Tarikh-i-Feroz Shahi- Ziaud-din Barani.

This is a Persian text and has been translated into English in ^{the} Bibliotheca Indica Series, and the History of India, by Elliot and Dowson, Vol. III. We have used this source in connection with the history of Kamatapur.

Account of contemporary foreign travellers.

The only foreign traveller to have left an account of ^{any} part of our region during the period under consideration was Ralph Fitch, who visited Koch Behar during the reign of Nara Narayan (1540-84). His account has been edited by J.H. Ryley (London, 1899).

Part I.The Ahoms.Chapter I.The Rise of Ahom Kingdom.(1) Origin of the Ahoms:

The origin of the Ahoms is confused just as is that of the other remote tribes of India. But the majority of scholars are of the opinion that they are the descendants of the Shans^{or Tais} of South-East Asia.

Prof. D.G.E. Hall says that the Shans, the Laos and the Siamese of to-day are all descended from a racial group, cognate to the Chinese and known among themselves as the Tai. From the Sixth century B.C. onwards, Chinese records make frequent reference to these 'Barbarians' on the south of the Yang-tse-kiang. Early in the Christian Era, the Tai came under Chinese suzerainty, but were often in rebellion and ever anxious to assert their independence. In the middle of the Seventh century A.D., they formed the powerful kingdom of Nanchao, which exerted a far from inconsiderable influence upon the course of Burmese history before the rise of Pagan. Tai tribes also found their way into South-Eastern China on the one side and the Northern Shan States of Burma on the other. In 1229, Tai immigrants founded the Ahom kingdom of Assam on the Brahmaputra valley.¹

Sir Edward Gait is of opinion that early in the Thirteenth century, a group of hardy hillmen wandered into the eastern extremity of the Brahmaputra valley, led by chance rather than by any deep-seated design, and quite unconscious of the fact that their descendants were destined to bring the whole valley under their rule and to set a limit to the eastward

extension of the empire of the Mughals. They were the progenitors of the Ahoms. They were an offshoot of the great Tai or Shan race, which spreads eastwards, from the border of Assam over nearly the whole of Further India and far into the interior of China. Shans proper, occupied the northern and eastern hill tracts of upper Burma and western Yunnan, where they formed a group of states. The paramount kingdom, the home of the Mau branch of the tribe, was known to themselves as Mung Mau and as Pong to the Manipuris. Sometimes the latter term denotes the entire country of collection of states.¹

Dr. S.K.Chatterjee says that the advent of the Ahoms in India formed a part of the general movement of Dai or Thai people from south China, which appears to have been going on during the second half of the First millenium A.D., in South-East Asia, and led ultimately to the settlement of the Laos in Indo-China (Vietnam). The Thai proper or the Siamese first visited northern Siam and gradually spread all over Siam, and the Shans settled in northern Burma. From the Shan lands in north Burma, these hardy Sino-Tibetan hillmen, speaking what may be described as a form of Siamese and first cousin to the Bodos and other Tibeto-Burmans already established in Assam and India, following the course of the Lohit and the eastern tributaries of the Brahmaputra, after crossing the Patkai range found themselves at the extreme east of the Brahmaputra valley. The first Shan or Thai invaders consisted of 9000, men, women and children. So, it is generally surmised that the bulk were adult males who had to provide themselves with wives from among the local Bodo tribes. Thus the process of miscegenation

¹H.A. p-70.

among two branches of the great Kirata people started.¹

Dr. S.K. Bhuyan states that the Ahoms are the members of the Shan branch of the great Tai or Thai family extends from the gulf of Siam northwards into Yunnan and thence westwards to Assam, and it comprises several divisions, the Siamese, Laos, Shans, Tai-mow or Taikhi (Chinese Shans), Khamti and Ahom. The prestige associated with the name Tai or Thai, literally, of celestial origin, is seen in the Ahoms still designating themselves by that name though most of them have been converted to Hinduism, and the recent attempt to rename the Siamese kingdom as Thailand.²

The traditions of the Ahoms regarding the origin of their kings tally very closely with those preserved by the Shans of Upper Burma. But there are also some differences in matters of detail and especially in the names of the various rulers and of the places where they reigned.³ A more noteworthy note of divergence is that the Shan chronicles contain no reference to Sukapha's invasion of Assam. They claim that Samlungpha, the brother of a king of Mung Mau, who ascended the throne in 1220, gained several notable victories in Upper Assam, where he defeated the Chutias, as well as, in Arakan, Manipur and other countries. The actual fact seems to be that while Sukapha was pushing his way across the Patkai, with a small body of colonists

¹Chatterjee S.K., The Place of Assam in the History of India, Gauhati, 1955, p-40.

²Bhuyan S.K. Anglo-Assamese Relations, Gauhati, 1949, p-2.

³At the suggestion of Prof. Hall, I wrote to Prof. Re M Lung Tin of Rangoon university, requesting him to supply me with necessary information on this point, but unfortunately I have not received since any response.

rather than of military invaders, and establishing himself in the south-eastern corner of the Brahmaputra valley, the general of another Shan tribe may have entered the valley by a more easterly route and inflicted a series of defeats on the Mishmis, Khantis and Sighphos of the north of tact where the Ahoms made their first lodgement and returned home, invading Manipur and Arakan on the way.

(2) Outline of Ahom History:

We commence our study of the early Ahom kingdom with a brief summary of Ahom history from the first invasion to the occupation of Assam by the British.

It has already been noticed that the Ahoms were an offshoot of the great Tai or Shan race, which spreads from the border of Assam to the whole of Further India, up to the interior of China. The particular section to which they belonged, or the Shans proper, inhabited the northern and eastern hill tracts of Upper Burma and Western Yunnan, where they formed a group of states. In ^{the} early part of the Thirteenth century, these Sino-Tibetan hillmen followed the course of the Lohit and the eastern tributaries of the Brahmaputra and reached to its valley after crossing the Patkai. They first fought with the indigenous peoples of the region, who were divided into petty principalities, and were not in a position to resist the advent of the powerful invaders. From the Thirteenth century to the Fifteenth, the Ahoms were mainly busy in consolidating their power. Sections of the Nagas and the Kacharis were brought under Ahom domination, as well as some tribes of the Tai race who had settled in Assam long before Sukapha's invasion. But real expansion

began from the Sixteenth century, when the Ahom king Suhungmung, the Dihingia Raja annexed the kingdom of the Chutias centering round their capital Sadiya. The same king drove the Kacharis from their stronghold at Dimapur. The Bhuyan chieftains, who had been ruling in the north bank of the Brahmaputra, were brought under Ahom control. The history of the Ahoms of the Seventeenth century was mainly one of the Ahom-Mughal conflicts which arose out of the ambitions of the Mughals to extend their territories further to the east, the intervention of the Ahoms in the affairs of the rival princes of Koch-Bihar, and the violation by the Ahoms of the terms of the treaties entered ^{into} by them with the Mughals. By the beginning of the Eighteenth century, king Rudra Singha, a man of great ability and ambition, having brought the neighbouring territories under his domination, turned his attention towards organising a confederacy of the Rajas of Hindustan with a view to oust the Mughals. After this king the history of the Ahoms is ^{one} ~~the~~ ^A ~~history~~ of internal strifes and dissensions, downfall and disintegration. In 1817, the Burmese invaded the country and, in 1822, achieved the complete domination of Assam. But in 1824, the British entered Assam and expelled the Burmese from their commanding position up the river Brahmaputra. By the treaty of Yandabu, enacted in 1826, Assam passed into the hands of the East India Company. Thus the Ahoms ruled in Assam for about Six hundred years.

(3) The name Assam:

The Ahom rulers played an important role in the history of mediaeval ~~Assam~~ India, and once attained a very high imperial position. They were

designated as 'Svargadeos' meaning kings from heaven. In their palmy days, the boundary of their realm embraced the whole of the North-East of the Indian sub-continent from the sources of the Brahmaputra to the river Karatoya and from the bottom of the Himalayas to the hills of Surma and Subansiri valley.¹ They were so powerful that the kingdom they carved out for themselves came to be associated with their name as a nation. The word 'Assam' or 'Ahom' has been a bone of contention to the scholars in the field.

Robinson contends that the name Assam is generally supposed to be derived from the Sanskrit term 'asama', a compound word formed from the negative particle 'a ' and 'sama'(equal), signifying 'unequalled' or 'unrivalled'; He further says that this derivation was merely an invention of the Brahmans after the conversion of the Ahoms into the Brahmanical faith. These Ahoms were a tribe of the Shans, who invaded the country, and from whom it might in greater probability have derived its present appellation.²

E. Gait suggests that 'Asam' is a Sanskrit derivative which these Mongolian tribes would not have been acquainted with and the suggested etymology has hitherto been rejected. The Ahoms called themselves Tai, which means 'glorious', and of this 'Asama' is a fair Assamese equivalent, just as is Svargadeo (king of heaven) of Chaopha, and Gohain (chief) of Chao. The softening of the s to h, from Asam to Aham or Ahom, has its counterparts in the change from Gosain to Gohain. From the ~~Assamese~~ people, the name was subsequently applied to the country.³

¹See pp. 99-100.

²Robinson W. A Descriptive Account of Assam, Calcutta, 1841, p-2.

³H.A. p-246.

B.K.Kakati says that Asama (peerless), may be a later Sanskritisation of some earlier form like Acham. In Tai, Veham means 'to be defeated'. With the Assamese prefix a, the whole formation Asam would mean 'undefeated' 'conquerors'. The word Asam was first applied to the Shans and subsequently to the country they conquered.¹

S.K.Chatterjee suggests that the affiliation of the name Ahom-Asam to the tribal name of the Ahoms themselves has been adopted by the Burmese. When the Burmese met the Shan people, they noted their name and wrote it down in the Mau script as 'Rhwan'. Owing to certain characteristic developments of Burmese phonology, the word has now come to be pronounced in modern Burmese as Shan. The name Ahom appears to be connected as a tribal name with this 'Rhwan' and a case of early dropping of the initial R in Ahom mouths, or its modification to A, to give the form Ahom. As a foreign tribal name, Ahom was not properly understood by old Assamese speaking Hindus and ~~other~~ tribal peoples when the Ahom conquerors came into eastern Assam. The name Ahom was then corrected to its original Sanskrit form, A-sama and this gave the word Asam-Assam as the name of the country which the Ahoms conquered and in which they established themselves.²

The tradition~~s~~ of the Ahoms themselves, is that the present name is derived from 'Asama' in the sense unequalled or peerless. The term^{was} applied to them at the time of their invasion of the valley, by the local tribes in token of their admiration of the way in which the Ahom king first conquered and then conciliated them.³

¹Kakati B.K. Assamese, its formation and development, Gauhati, 1941.pp-1-3.

²Chatterjee S.K. The Place of Assam in the History ~~of~~ and Civilisation of India, Gauhati, 1955.pp-42-43.

³Tamuliphukan K.N. A.B. Calcutta, 1906, p-11.

The Muslim chroniclers wrote 'Asham', and in early period of the British rule, it was spelt with only one 'S'. Some are of the opinion that the word is derived from Asama, in the sense 'uneven' as distinguished from Samatata, or ~~the~~ level plains of East Bengal.¹ This does not appear correct. The word 'Ahom' nowhere occurs prior to the Ahom occupation, and in the 'Vamsavali' of the Koches, it is applied to the Ahoms rather than to their country.² The word is, no doubt, derived from the present designation of the Ahoms.

(4) The capitals of the Ahoms.

The first capital of the Ahom rulers in Assam was built at Charaideo, in middle of the Thirteenth century, by the founder king Sukapha. In later time the capital was transferred from Charaideo to Garhgaon by Suklenmung or Garhgaya Raja (1539-52). The city of Garhgaon had four gates of stone and mud. It was circular and wide, and composed of many villages. A high state of order and refinement prevailed there.³ The ruins of this famous city is still in existence.

(5) The contribution of the Ahoms to Indian life.

The Ahoms unified Assam. They fought the Muslim invaders, and after varying fortunes in war, they finally drove them out of their territory in the last quarter of the Seventeenth century. They were very practical in the art of war. They learnt from the Muhammadans the use of firearms

¹H.A. p-245.

²D.R.V. pp. 40-41.

³Fathiya-i-Ibriya, J.B.O.R.S., 1915, p-193.

during the early part of the Sixteenth century, and themselves soon became experts in the manufacture of cannon, guns and matchlocks. These rulers stopped the Muslim flood from penetrating into Burma, Siam and Indo-China. The Arabs and ~~later~~ later on the Indian Muslim merchants from western India, found a direct line of access by sea to Malaya and Indonesia, but a land-route for aggressive advance was denied to them through North-Eastern India by the Ahoms. Otherwise, the history of Burma and Siam and Indo-China might have been different.

The Ahoms had a sense of history. It is remarkable how this sense characterised the Kirata peoples more than the Aryo-Dravido-Austriac Hindus of other parts of India. They made history writing quite a distinctive feature of Assamese culture, in both ^{the} Ahom and Assamese languages. The result was the development in ~~the~~ Assamese of a terse and vigorous prose style for writing history, quite different from the flowery and picturesque literary styles of the rest of India.¹

The valuable contribution of the Ahoms to the culture of North-Eastern India is due to their racial admixture with the indigenous population of the soil. The majority of the followers of Sukapha were adult males. They had left their women-folk in their Shan homeland as being incapable of the strenuous life of adventures, and were, therefore compelled to marry from among the women of the conquered, the Morans, the Borahis and the Chutias. Speaking of the relations of the Ahoms with these tribes, Atan Bargohain

¹Chatterjee S.K. The Place of Assam into the History and Civilisation of India, Gauhati, 1955, p-46.

(1662-79), said, "Sukapha had greater regard for the abilities and personal qualities of the Chutias, Borahis and Morans, whom he met at different places, than towards his own followers. Since that time, there was an admixture of blood and children were of mixed origin as the Ahoms had not brought their wives when they first came from Nara, and as they accepted wives only when they came here".¹

Sukapha the Great (1228-68).

We have dealt at length in the introduction with the course of events that was prevailing in Assam and its neighbouring countries at the time of the advent of the Ahoms. There we have noticed that by the beginning of the Thirteenth century, Upper Burma and Western Yunnan, occupied by the people of the Shan origin, formed a group of petty states. Sukapha was the leader of the body of Shans who laid the foundation of the Ahom kingdom in Assam. The word Sukapha means 'a tiger from heaven'.

^{sukapha's} ancestry, ~~the~~ original homeland and the reason of ^{his} leaving ^{it}, of Sukapha, are shrouded in mystery. The chronicles of the Ahoms are not unanimous on these points.

It is mentioned in one of the Ahom Buranjis that Santaipha, Khumkhum, Santaipha and Santaiphun ruled successively in Munlin. Santaiphun had three sons and one daughter. He died, having divided his kingdom among his three sons. Pameoplun, one of them, extended his kingdom as far as Munphagun. Later on, one Sanlantantaipha migrated to Munphagun from Mungkha-Mungja; he was a great warrior, and his name soon became a terror to the surrounding

Rajas. Pameoplun made a treaty with him and gave his sister in marriage. By her Sanlanta~~anta~~taipha had a son named Sukapha. Pameoplun, who till then was childless, looked upon Sukapha as his successor. Subsequently, however, his wife gave birth to a male child named Sukhanpha. As Sukapha had now no chance of succeeding his uncle, he went westward, accompanied by a large number of followers, and having crossed several ranges of mountains and conquered the Nagas and other hill tribes on his way, he at length reached the plains of Upper Assam, where he established a kingdom.¹

According to another Ahom Buranji, Taolulu, the eldest son of Khunlung, became king of Mungrimungram. He was succeeded by his son Chao-Changbun, who in turn by his son Chao-Changnyeu. The latter was succeeded by his ~~son~~ brother, Chaotaipha, after whom his son Phanlangjeng)Klangrai became king. After his death, his brother, Taongaklem got the throne. This king was succeeded by his son, Taokhunming. When the latter died, his son, Taokhunkum succeeded him. He was succeeded by his son, Chao-Taihung. His eldest son was Chao-Tailung and the youngest, Pameoplung. Phuchangkhang, the third, succeeded him. Phuchangkhan had three sons, two of them became kings of some better neighbouring countries, and Sukapha, the third, succeeded him. Sukapha, being unwilling to rule there left the country and migrated westward. He arrived in the country Mungdunshunkham (a country full of gardens of gold).² It is mentioned in the Buranji that this country is now called Assam.³

¹R.P.H.R.A. Ppp-16-17.

²A.H.B. p-24.

³Ibid. p-25.

It is mentioned in the Deodhai Asam Buranji that Sukapha was the son of Pameupung, king of Mungjamungji. His mother was Langnamap, the daughter of Thaokhenmung. The same Buranji, basing its statement on earlier texts of the same kind, states that Bakal-khamdeng was the father of Sukapha, who was born and brought up in his maternal uncle's house in Maolung or Maulung.¹ This is a clear recollection of a matrilinear family system among the early Ahoms, such as still prevails among the Khasis, and other tribal peoples of Assam. We know of no other similar references in our Buranjis. Sukapha was brought up there as an heir to the throne, as his maternal uncle, Tyaotyanglau, the king of Maulung, had no child. But subsequently, a son, Sukhranpha by name, was born to Tyaotanglau. As then Sukapha had no hope of succession to the throne, he left for Mungjamungji, the kingdom of his father, Pameupung, and from there he undertook his invasion to Upper Assam.²

It is stated in the Purani Asam Buranji that Tyaochangneng, a descendant of Khunlai, settled himself in the kingdom of Mungkhamungja. But he driven away from there by the enemies to the Maran kingdom. Under similar circumstances, he had to leave that country for the Nara kingdom. The then Nara king had only a daughter, who was given in marriage to Tyaochangneng. Sukapha was born from their union. He was considered as an heir to the throne of his maternal grand-father, the Nara king. Subsequently, a son, Sukranpha by name, was born to the above king, when, there being no possibility of succession to the throne, Sukapha migrated to the western countries, where he founded the Ahom kingdom.³

¹D.A.B. pp-4-5.

²Ibid.

³P.A.B. pp-12-13.

Haliram says that Chaukhunyaw, a descendant of Khunlai, became the king of Mungkhramungja country. Next he migrated to Mungkhan, and from there to Mungmau. He gave his sister, Langmungbulckhamchen, in marriage to Pameupung, a descendant of Khunlung, and made him the king of Khranangjing country. Sukapha was born to them. He was brought up in his maternal uncle's place. In his 19th years of age, he became the king of Khranangjing, his father's land. Next he migrated to the western country.¹

Kasinath says that Pameupung was the king of Maulung. He was childless and on his death, Tyaoaimkhamneng of Mungkhumungjao country became the king. This king was succeeded by Sukhanpha. Phutyangkhang was the king of Mungmitkupking country. He had three sons. The eldest Sujatpha became the king of Taip country. The second son Sukhampha became the king of Taipong country. The youngest Sukapha succeeded to the kingdom of his father. There ensued a battle between Sukhanpha, king of Maulung, and the king of Junlung country, when Sukhampha asked for aid from Sukapha who refused. Next Sukhanpha invaded the country of Sukapha, who fled to the Mungkang country, and from there he undertook his invasion of Upper Assam.²

Gunabhiram says that there was a king in Mungringmungjao country named Khampangpha. After him 11 rulers ruled the country for 357 years, and the last of whom died childless in A.D. 1036. Next Tyaoaipong, a prince of Junlung country succeeded to the throne. After this king 15 rulers ruled the country in regular succession, and the last of them had four sons, of

¹A.B. pp-44-45.

²Ibid. pp-8-9.

when Sukapha succeeded to the throne. Quarrelling with one of his brothers, Sukapha fled to ~~the~~ Mungkang and from there he undertook his campaign to Upper Assam.¹ Basing his statements on some other texts of the same kind, ^{Gunabhiram} also states that, among the countries of the Shans, there was a country named Pong, the capital of which was Mangmaorang. Margnau, the king of that country, was succeeded by his two sons, Sukampha and Samlompha. Both of them attacked and occupied Manipur, Cachar and other countries. At last, they quarrelled with each other and one of them planned to go to the western countries. This man was Sukapha, who invaded and occupied Upper Assam after a series of attacks upon the local tribes.²

From the records of the above Buranjis, it appears that Sukapha was a prince by birth and his country of origin was Maulung in Upper Burma. In these points our views are identical with those of N. Elias, who records, presumably from the Shan chronicles, that Sukapha was a son of Fu-Sang-Kang, the tsaubwa of Momiet, a kingdom stretching from the left bank of the Irrawady and Kusambi to the territory of the Khamti Shans in the north.³ The statement of the Deodhai Asam Buranji, as to ~~the~~ humble origin of Sukapha, is of doubtful historicity. Though Sukapha left Maulung as a result of some quarrel with his kinsmen, he sent presents to them at a later time when he became the paramount lord of the whole of ~~the~~ Upper Assam.⁴ There is no doubt that the original home of the Ahoms was somewhere in the ancient kingdom of Pong, for the Ahoms are genuine Shans, both in their physical type and in their tribal language and written character. The movements of the Ahoms across the Patkai was by no means an isolated occurrence. The Khamtis, the Phakials, Aitonias, Turungs and Khamjangs are all Shan tribes who have, at different times, moved along the same route.

¹ A.B. Gunabhiram, pp-78-79. ² Ibid. p-82. ³ H.S. p-50. ⁴ A.B. Tamuliphukan, p-12

Like ~~Sukapha's~~^{his} ancestry, ~~his~~^{his} original homeland, and the reason of ~~his~~ his leaving it, Sukapha's date of birth and the date of his invasion of Assam, are also bones of contention to the scholars in the field. Though Sukapha was a prince from a Shan Kingdom, the chronicles of the Shans contain no reference to the above facts. It is mentioned in the Deodhai Asam Buranji that Sukapha was born in 1211 and invaded Assam in 1228.¹ Haliram says that the date of birth of Sukapha was the year 1195, and ~~his~~ his invasion of Assam took place in 1246.² Kasinath³ and Gunabhiram⁴ do not mention Sukapha's date of birth but only the date of his invasion of Assam as the year 1228. There being no means to confirm these early dates of the Buranjis, no scientific and comprehensive study has been made on the topic.

It is mentioned in the Deodhai Asam Buranji that an eclipse of the Sun took place ~~in~~ in the reign of Susenpha, in Lakli Rangseo, which is equivalent to 1486. We know that there was a partial eclipse of the Sun on the 6th March, 1486, of which the maximum phase occurred shortly before local mid-day. The exact time for the centre of eclipse quoted by Oppolzer, was ~~at~~ 5^h 36^m U.T.⁵ The mention has been made in the Buranji that Sudangpha who was the great-grand-father of Susenpha, was the 8th ruler in the line of the Ahom kings.⁶ So, it becomes clear that before Susenpha, there were

¹D.A.B. pp-4-5.

²A.B. pp-44-45.

³ Ibid. pp-8-9.

⁴ Ibid. pp-78-79.

⁵Record of H.M.Nautical Almanac Office, Royal Greenwich Observatory, Hertmonceux castle, Nr. Hailsham, Sussex. Information communicated to me on the 8th February, 1956. Vide Appendix, p- 283.

⁶A.B., Barua H.K. pp-19-20.

some ten rulers who ruled the country. The average span of the reign of the kings from Susenpha to Sudinpha or Chandrakanta Singha, after whom the Burmese occupied the country, is 17 years, if we overlook the period 1669-81, during which a number of weak kings ruled the country amidst internal strife and dissension simultaneously with the consequences of the foreign invasion. The later period ~~was~~ was generally characterised by more dissension and foreign invasion than the earlier. We may therefore assign up to 21 years for each of the peaceful and prosperous reigns of the early rulers before Susenpha, excluding the period of interregnum of about 12 years. Thus we get roughly the early part of the Thirteenth century as the dates of Sukapha's birth and his invasion of Assam.

The coins of Suklenmung also testify to the above mentioned dates. The obverse of the coin contain the five-lined legend- Chaopha Suklenmun pinchao lakni plekni, which means that in the 15th year of the Jovian cycle of the 60 years in the reign of the great king Suklenmung, which can be calculated the year 1543¹. We know that there were some 14 rulers who ruled before Suklenmung. Here also if we assign some 21 years for each of the 14 rulers before Suklenmung, we get the early part of the Thirteenth century. So we find no reason to discredit the statement of Haliram that Sukapha was born in 1195, and the statement recorded in the Deodhai Asam Buranji that, in the year 1228, Sukapha arrived at the border of Upper Assam to invade it.

About the year 1215, Sukapha left Maulung, his home-country, with 9,000 infantry, 300 cavalry and two elephants. For 13 years, he wandered about the hilly country of the Patkai, making occasional raids on the Naga villages, and in 1228, he arrived at Khamjang, the north-eastern border of Upper Assam.¹ From the course of his expedition, it appears that Sukapha followed the land route from China to India through Yunnan, Upper Burma and Assam.²

As soon as Sukapha crossed the Khamjang river and reached to the Nongnyang lake, some Nagas attempted to resist his advance, but he defeated all of them. This great victory of Sukapha against the powerful Nagas of the region created such widespread terror that the other Nagas of the neighbourhood hastened to make their submission. Leaving Kangkhrumung, one of his nobles, to rule the conquered country, Sukapha proceeded to Daikaorang, Khamnangnangpu and Namruk. In 1229, Sukapha got on the rafts and ascended the Dihing river but, finding the place unsuitable, he retraced his steps and reached to Tipam and stayed there up to 1230. Finding the country to be overflowed by the water of the Dihing river, Sukapha put Kanngan, one of his nobles, in charge of the place and proceeded downstream. In 1234, he reached Abhoypur and stopped there for 5 years until 1238. As that country was thinly populated, he did not remain there long and proceeded downstream the river Tilao and arrived in ^{the} Habung country where he lived up to 1241. While there the Ahoms lived by cultivation. But this place also was liable to inundation

¹ A.H.B. p-44.

² Hall D.G.E. A History of South-East Asia, London, 1955, p-21.

and a heavy flood necessitated another move. He then proceeded down the river till he reached the mouth of the Dikhau. Then he advanced upstream and arrived ^{at} a valley called Jakunpak. From there he ascended the river and got ^{to} Silpani where he remained for some time. While at Silpani, Sukapha kept close contact with the Jakunpak valley where ^{the} majority of his followers had already settled. In 1243, Sukapha appointed Mungringmungching as the Governor of the valley and himself proceeded to Simaluguri. There he halted and offered a feast to his nobles and followers. He enquired and found that there were 3,300 ghats at the Namdang river from which the inhabitants used to draw the water. Considering that place to be thickly populated and apprehending some rebellion from the local peoples, Sukapha left Simaluguri for Timan and stopped there. Staying there for the next 6 years, he left that country and reached Timak in 1249. Next he made a ^{settlement} at Mungtinamao and stayed there the whole year 1250. In 1251, Sukapha took some of his followers and went to Charaideo on a small hill and constructed a town there. ^{1 We believe that} Sukapha selected Charaideo as suitable for his royal city and palace, owing to the fact that it was above the level of the plain land and was situated just adjacent to a small hill, which had importance from the strategic point of view.

Next Sukapha sent a series of campaigns to the neighbouring countries, which were being ruled at that time by the Chutias, the Morans, the Borahis, the Nagas, the Kacharis and the most powerful ^{Kingdom of the region, Kamarupa} ~~one of the most powerful~~.

¹ A.H.B. pp-44-47. The same story is told with slight variation in all the other Buranjis.

After having conquered the countries of the Chutias, the Kacharis and the Kamata king, Sukapha allowed them to remain as they had been in the past on condition of offering tribute.¹ The Borahi king Badancha and the Moran king Thakumtha acknowledged the supremacy of the Ahom king and regularly supplied him thenceforward the various products of the jungles, the elephants, dye, honey and mats. Sukapha adopted conciliatory measures towards these peoples, and by treating them as equals, and encouraging inter-marriage, absorbed them into one nation.²

Sukapha conquered practically the whole of Upper Assam, the tract south-west of the Chutias and the east of the Kacharis to the Patkai Range at the border of Upper Burma and founded his capital at Charaideo, in the modern district of Sibsagar, which possessed the advantage of being situated at the centre of his directly governed territory. He had also conquered all the countries on the way from Upper Burma to the eastern border of Upper Assam and appointed his nobles to rule over those regions. He made friendship with his brother rulers in his ancestral home in Upper Burma, and sent them presents of gold and silver.³ Sukapha died in 1268.

Sukapha was a very brave and enterprising king. From a very early age, he began a career of wars and conquests. His ambitions for supremacy and power might have caused him to become a source of unrest under the disorganised administration of his home-country. His army consisted of males only, who, unlike many other Asian armies of the time, had no women

¹A.H.B. p-38.

²A.B. Tamuliphukan, p-11.

³Ibid. p-12.

with them. His troops were said to have carried their provision with them. This indicates the far-sightedness of Sukapha and his ideas of self-sufficiency, whether or not in his army organisation he was following the traditions of other Shan peoples. He fought with and defeated all the hill tribes on his way to Assam. He also defeated most of the rulers and chiefs of mediaeval Assam, who came to resist him. By far the most significant and decisive of his victories, was his success in winning over the powerful Nagas of the north-eastern frontier of India. In a word, his career of conquests knew no defeats.

Sukapha was a good administrator. He adopted conciliatory measures towards the indigenous peoples of Assam by showing respect to their sentiments and culture. He was reasonable. He did not fight against the people who acknowledged his supremacy. Unlike many other invaders of India, Sukapha was not a raider. Pillage and loot were unknown to his military career. It was never found his intention to plunder but to rule. He placed one of his nobles to administer each of the conquered countries on his way to Assam. According to the necessity of the situation, he could be cruel or kind. To deal with the hostile Nagas of the Patkai, Sukapha became so cruel that they never dared rebellion a second time, not to speak of during his life-time but ^{even} a century and a half later.¹ To make the Ahoms powerful and their rule permanent, Sukapha deliberately undertook conciliatory steps ^{towards} the neighbouring kings, on condition of tribute. He appointed Katakis in the vassal kingdoms to maintain good relations, a fact considered

¹ See Chapter II, p- 78.

most essential for the foundation, growth and prosperity of his newly established regime. He appointed two chiefs, Burhagohain and Bargohain, as his assistants, who exercised enormous power in all the affairs of the state, being responsible only to the king.¹ The political instincts which actuated the Ahoms to record the chief events of the reign in the Burahjis, the most valuable of their contributions to the Indian culture, are traceable from the command of Sukapha to the effect that the court chroniclers should record the detailed particulars of every reign.²

¹See Chapter, IV. pp. III-12.
²D.A.B. p-90.

Chapter II

The Early Ahom Kings.Suteupha (1268-1281).

Suteupha succeeded to the Ahom throne, on the death of his father, Sukapha the great, about the year 1268. In this reign the first Burhagohain, Klinglunmangrai, who accompanied Sukapha from the Shan land died, and his son Thaoruru succeeded him. Similarly on the death of ^{the} Bargohain, Kanangan, at this time, his son Chaobin succeeded him.¹

Suteupha fought with the Kacharis, whose kingdom at that time extended ~~about 100 miles~~ along the south bank of the Brahmaputra, from the Dikhu to the Kalang, and included the valley of the Dhansiri and the tract which now forms the North Cachar Subdivision. The Kachari king was defeated in the battle and the outlying Kachari settlements east of the Dikhu river were abandoned to the Ahoms.² For the next hundred years, this river appears to have formed the boundary between the two nations, and no hostilities are recorded until 1490, when a battle was fought on its banks.³ Until the beginning of the Seventeenth century, when Yasanarayan became the Kachari king, nothing more is known of the Kachari affairs, but it may be said that, during this period, the Kachari kings held the greater part of the Nowgong district and the North Cachar Hills and gradually extended their rule into the plains of Cachar. It is impossible, however, to ascertain the name of the Kachari king who fought with Suteupha.

It is mentioned in one of the Buranjis that there was a battle between the Naras of Mungkang and the people of Mantara or Burma. In the struggle

¹A.B. Barua H.K. p-8.

²Ibid. Haliram, p-49.

³A.H.B. p-52-53.

the Naras were defeated and asked help from Suteupha, who replied that he would send a force to their assistance if the Nara king offered him a daughter in marriage. On the refusal of the latter, a quarrel ensued and Suteupha sent an army against the Nara king. In the battle the Ahoms were worsted and the Burhagohain, who led the expedition, was slain. The Bargohain was immediately sent with a second battallion, but instead of fighting, he made friendship with the Naras. Suteupha disgraced and imprisoned the Bargohain on his return but subsequently forgave him on the request and mediation of other nobles.¹ Suteupha ruled the country for 13 years and died in 1281.

Subinpha (1281-1293).

Suteupha had four sons of whom Subinpha succeeded him in 1281. In this reign the post of Bargohain was given to a new noble, Thaomang-saobin-seng-barpon by name.² Subinpha does not appear to have made any addition to the territory conquered by his predecessors. He distributed his subjects in equal divisions between the Burhagohain and the Bargohain. He died in the year 1293.²

Sukhangpha (1293-1332).

Sukhangpha succeeded to the Ahom throne in 1293. From the time of Sukapha to the reign of this king, a long period of peace and order existed in the kingdom and the Ahoms succeeded in fully establishing their supremacy over the indigenous population of the land. Though the Buranjis do not

¹ H.A. p-79. This is recorded by Gait who was presumably using a manuscript Source; but he does not mention it by name and the events are not recorded in any Buranjis available to us.

² A.B. Barua, p-14.

mention the fact, there can be no doubt that they greatly increased in numbers partly by the process of natural growth but probably also by the arrival of fresh immigrants from their original land. ^{By} ~~^~~ This time the Ahoms became strong enough to maintain their hegemony against the ~~more~~ powerful neighbouring kings. The outcome was a series of feuds and wars which ultimately made them the paramount authority over the whole of the Brahmaputra valley.¹

Sukhangpha's ambition for territorial aggrandizement, brought him to war with the powerful Kamata king Pratapadhvaj. Hostilities continued for several years with enormous losses on both sides, and at last, the Kamatesvar, being tired of incessant wars, sent an envoy on the advice of his courtiers for peace. Subsequently a treaty was concluded between the belligerent parties, as a result of which Pratapadhvaj gave his daughter, Rajani, in marriage to the Ahom king.² The chronicles say nothing about any increase of Sukhangpha's territory as result of this war, but it must at least have strengthened his position.

A noble of Satgharia, Taphrikin by name, was appointed to the post of Bargohain by this king. Sukhangpha died in 1332, after a reign of 32 years. He had four sons, Sukhrangpha, Sutupha, Tyaokhamti and Taosulai, the last mentioned being by the Kamata princess Rajani.³ The territory of

¹A.B. Gunabhiram, p-86.

²A.H.B. p-46.

³A.B. Barua, p-15.

the kingdom certainly included Athgaon and Saring, which were occupied by the Kamata king in the following reign.

Gait records from one of the Buranjis which is not available to us that the Nara king of Mungkang demanded tribute from Sukhangpha, on the ground of his being the lineal descendant of the Maulung chief in whose reign Sukapha had emigrated. The demand was not complied with and soon afterwards the Nara king died.¹ Such tribute had never been demanded before, as far as is known. The Shan chronicles tell us nothing about this matter. It is mentioned in the table of the Mogaung Tsaubwas that Chau-kun-lao reigned there from 1248-1308 and his son Chau-pu-reing from 1308-1344.² From the alleged length of the former's reign, it appears that he was quite powerful. Sukhangpha, however, was strong enough to resist him.

The very long and successful reign of Sukhangpha, though the Buranjis devote only a few lines to it, was evidently one of great importance in which the strength and influence of the Ahoms greatly increased.

Sukhrangpha (1332-1364).

Sukhrangpha, the eldest of the last king's four sons, ascended the Ahom throne on the death of his father. He appointed his step-brother, Tao Sulai or Tao Pulai, son of the Kamata princess Rajani, the Saring Raja (governor of Saring). Then there ensued a conspiracy among the nobles and princes of the royal family against the present king. The plot being detected, Tao Pulai fled to his kinsman, the Raja of Kamata, Durlabh Narayan.

¹H.A. pp-80-81.

²H.S. p-45.

Being requested for help against the Ahom king, Durlabh marched with an army to Athgaon and from thence to Saring and constructed a fort there. Sukhrangpha became alarmed and, before resorting to direct resistance, opened negotiations with the conspirators. This gave good results. The Kamata king withdrew from the Ahom territory. Subsequently Sukhrangpha realised that Bargohain Taphrikhin was the person who was really responsible for the revolt and accordingly determined to punish him. The Bargohain concealed himself until the affair had blown off. He was subsequently forgiven and taken back into favour.¹ In this reign, Thaophrangdam, the eldest son of Thaoruru, became Burhagohain. Sukhrangpha died in 1364, after a reign of 32 years.²

The reign of Sukhrangpha marks the first mention of revolt on the part of the great nobles. It is evident that by this time the Ahom kingdom had grown in size and the Gohains, who were put in charge of the large provinces, were approaching the status of feudal lords.

Sutupha (1364-1376).

On the death of Sukhrangpha in 1364, his younger brother, Sutupha succeeded to the throne. There were continued conflicts with the Chutias during this reign. Ultimately the Chutia king, Sankhadhvaj (1364-1399), pretended a friendship with the Ahoms and invited the Ahom king to a friendly meeting. At last, in 1376, the Chutia king visited Sutupha at Chapaguri and invited him to a boat-race on the Safrai river. He took him on to his own barge without attendants and treacherously murdered him there.³

¹A.H.B. p-48.

²A.B. Barua, p-15.

³A.H.B. pp-48-49.

This is the first mention of the Chutia kingdom in the Buranjis. It is evident that they were growing in power at the time.

Interregnum (1376-1380).

On the death of Sutupha, there was no suitable person in the royal family, whom the great nobles considered worthy of the throne, and so, for 4 years, the Bargohain and Burhagohain carried on themselves the administration of the kingdom.¹

Tyaokhamti (1380-1389).

At last, in 1380, realising the many difficulties of governing the country without a king, the great nobles, after having had a consultation among themselves, decided to elect Tyaokhamti, the third son of Sukhangpha, to the throne. In the reign of this king, two new nobles, Saothaitum and Paria Tyatanbin, became Burhagohain and Bargohain respectively.¹²

Immediately after the accession, Tyaokhamti sent an expedition against the Chutia king to avenge the murder of Sutupha. He had two queens, the elder of whom was left in charge of the administration during his absence from the capital. The elder queen was on bad terms with the younger who was pregnant at that time. Considering that the newly born child would be the heir to the throne and the younger queen would become queen-mother, the elder queen took advantage of her position as regent to cause a false accusation to be preferred against the younger queen. The charge was investigated and declared true, when the elder queen ordered ^{the younger} ~~her~~ to be

¹A.H.B. p-49.

²Barua H.K. A.B. -p16.

beheaded. The nobles, however, seeing that she was pregnant, instead of killing her, set her adrift on the Brahmaputra on a raft. The king became victorious in his campaign against the Chutias, but was simply horrified, on his return to the capital,^{on} hearing the news of execution of his favourite queen, especially when a new and impartial enquiry showed that the allegations against her were false. He was however, too much under the influence of the elder queen to venture to take action against her. This, and his failure to prevent her from committing numerous acts of oppression, irritated the nobles so much that in 1389, they caused him to be assassinated.¹

Though the story of the unfortunate queen, which has an important sequel, may well contain legendary elements, it gives some indication of a further stage in the evolution of the Ahom state. The king is now surrounded by a large court and a harem, and the queens and officials are very important and influential. The old tribal organization had become a settled kingdom.

Interregnum (1389-1397).

There was again no suitable successor to the throne except Tao Sulai, the fourth son of king Sukhangpha by the Kamata princess Rajani. But this prince had already incurred much displeasure of the great nobles for his several attempts to subvert the empire. So the great nobles began to rule the country without a king for the second time.²

Some years later, a man named Thao Sheokhen went across the Brahmaputra to trade in cattle, and there, in Habung village, he saw a youth named Sudang

¹Tamuliphukan, A.B. pp-14-15.

²A.H.B. p-49.

of such noble characteristic that after proper enquiries, it was learnt that he was the son of Tyaokhamti's younger queen. The raft on which she was set adrift had floated to this Habung village, where a Brahman gave the unfortunate woman shelter. She died, after giving birth to this boy, who was brought up by the Brahman along with his own children. The nobles of the capital were informed of this, and after proper verification and consultation, they brought the youth and placed him on the throne.¹

This is the story as given in the Buranjis. It is too romantic and is too suggestive of similar stories elsewhere, to be worthy of credence. It may well be that this story was evolved to account for the influence of Brahmanism in the Ahom court. It is notable that from the reign of Sudangpha, the Brahmanical influence increased at court, at the expense of that of the nobles. There is no reference to Brahmans being present at the courts of earlier kings, but from now onwards such references become numerous. Evidently the reign of Sudangpha marks an important stage in the Hinduisation of the Ahoms.

Sudangpha (1397-1407).

Sudangpha ascended the throne in 1397, when he was a boy of 15 years of age.² The age of the king on accession is not generally given in the Buranjis. It may be that in this case Sudangpha is stated to be still a boy in order to reinforce the story of his origin. As he appears to have taken control with the energy and statecraft of a grown up man, the statement of his age seems suspiciously like the insertion of the chronicler. We believe

¹Tamuliphukan A.B. pp-14-15.

²Gunabhiram, A.B. pp-89-90.

that Sudangpha was full grown when he came to the throne, and was probably not related to the older royal family, but to one already influenced ^{by} the Brahmanical faith.

~~Sudangpha~~ Having been brought up in a Brahman's house, Sudangpha was called 'Brahman Prince'. He built a town at Charguya near the Dihing river. This reign marks the early stage in the growth of Brahmanical influence amongst the Ahoms. Sudangpha brought with him, from the Habung country, the Brahman who had given his mother shelter and reared him up along with his own children. He appointed the Brahman as his confidential adviser and the sons of the Brahman and other relatives were given higher posts in the administration. The influence of these Brahmans had, at last, caused the tribal Ahom court to be greatly Hinduised, and thenceforward Hindu rites and customs became ~~the regular practice~~ a regular practice in the capital. Sudangpha founded the Singarighar festival and was the first king to mint coins, recorded in the Buranji. Evidently this king appears to have assumed the dignified royal title 'Maharaja' and 'Rajesvar Chakravarti'.¹

Chastisement of the Tipamias:

The Tipam chiefs, who were dissatisfied with the new regime, conspired a plot against Sudangpha. The king being informed of this, abstained from taking any direct action. He caused a stockade to be constructed for catching elephants and having caught some, invited the Tipamias to join in celebrating the occasion by a feast. When the festivities were in full swing and all

¹Barua H.K. A.B. pp-18-20.

suspicion had ~~been~~ disappeared, the conspirators were suddenly overpowered and some of them who preferred fighting to confinement were put to death.¹

Battle with the Naras:

Thus ^{having} disposed of his more active enemies, Sudangpha endeavoured to conciliate the rest of the Tipamias by marrying Chao Nangsheng, the daughter of one of their chiefs named Khuntai. The girl, however, ~~was~~ already enamoured of a Tipamia named Chao Tashulai, and the latter, after dining once with with the king, sent a ring to the queen through an attendant who brought the matter to the notice of the king. Immediately ~~an~~ explanation was called ^{for} from Tashulai, who fled forthwith to Chao Shurunpha, the Nara king.² Tashulai informed the ~~Nara King~~ that there was no king of his family in Mungdunshunkham (Assam). Thus informed Shurunpha sent an expedition under Tashenpau or Tachanbing Bargohain to invade the Ahom kingdom. The Nara army marched down accordingly and pitched ~~his~~ tents near Kuhiarbari at Tipam. As soon as the news reached to Sudang^{pha}, he marched ~~at~~ the fore-front of a large army riding his elephant, Pairin, to meet the Naras. A battle was fought in which the Naras were defeated but Sudang^{pha} himself received a slight injury from a spear-thrust from the enemy.³ The Nara soldiers were pursued by the Ahoms as far as the Patkai. In 1401, a formal treaty was concluded at the initiative of the Ahom Bargohain, Tyatanbin, and the Nara Bargohain, Tashenpau, as a result of which Patkai was fixed as the boundary between the two countries. The meeting of the two Bargohains, who conducted the

¹A.H.B. pp-49-50.

²This name does not occur in the Shan chronicles.

³A.H.B. p-50.

negotiations for peace, took place on the side of the Nongnyang lake, 28 miles south-west of Margherita, and statues of them were carved on the rock there.¹ We have, however, not been able to find any trace of these statues at the present time. A solemn oath of amity and good will was sworn, and consecrated by the cutting up of a fowl. The word Patkai is said to be derived from this occurrence. The full name was Patkai-seng kan, which means "Cut-fowl-oath-sworn". The former name of the Pass at the time of invasion of Assam by Sukapha was Dai-kau-rang or "the Junction of nine peaks".²

Invasion of Kamata by the Ahoms:

Tashulai, being thus deprived of his asylum, took shelter with the Kamata king, presumably Sukranka (1400-1415).³ Sudangpha accordingly demanded the surrender of Tashulai from the Kamatesvar, who refused to give him up. Sudangpha immediately despatched an expedition under the leadership of ^{the} Bargohain, Tyatanbin, to invade Kamata. At last, the Kamata king, after due consultation with his ministers, decided to make friendship with the Ahoms. He gave his daughter, Bhajani to Sudangpha in marriage, with a dowry of two elephants and a number of horses and of male and female servants, as well as a quantity of gold and silver.⁴

Invasion of Bengal by the Ahoms:

It is mentioned in the Deodhai Asam Buranji that during the reign of Sudangpha, there were struggles between the Kamata king and the Muhammadans of Bengal.⁵ The Yogini Tantra also mentions a Muhammadan attack on Kamrup,

¹I&2 Barua H.K. A.B. pp-18-19.

³See Chapter V. pp. 162-63.

⁴A.H.B. pp-50-51.

⁵D.A.B. p-12.

in 1394, the 6th regnal year of Ghiyasu-d-din Azam Shah.¹ But the date of the above chronicle is not correct. The Muslim chronicles are silent on this point. Sikandar Shah, father of Ghiyasu-d-din, lived till October, 1393.² Ghiyasu-d-din, who had revolted against his father, was busy fighting with his father till the end of 1393. It is not at all likely that in the following year, instead of consolidating his position in Bengal, he sent an invasion to a distant country like Kamrup. The statement of the Deodhai Asam Buranji shows that the invasion took place after 1397 and before 1407, because, that is the reigning period of Sudangpha. The same Buranji ~~was~~ states that before the conflict with the Muhammadans, the Kamata king gave shelter to Tashulai. The history of Tashulai ^{shows} that he could seek his asylum only after a long time from the date of accession of Sudangpha. Therefore, we suggest that the Muhammadan invasion of Kamata took place sometime at the very beginning of the Fifteenth century, when the Kamata king incurred displeasure of Sudangpha on account of showing favour to ^{the} fugitive and vagabond Tashulai. Taking advantage of this, the Bengal Sultan invaded the territory of the Kamatesvar, who, being faced with the double danger, concluded peace with his co-religionist by matrimonial alliance and turned against the invader in combination with his new ally Sudangpha. The Bengali army could not make headway against the allied local armies and planned retreat. But that was not ^{the} only ~~the~~ story of their misfortune. Sudangpha sent a large expedition to invade Bengal. As a result the whole of the north-eastern

¹R.P.H.R.A. p-52.

²Bhattachali N.K. Coins and chronology of the Early Independent Sultans of Bengal. p-71.

Bengal up to the river Karatoya was conquered by the Ahoms.¹ The above fact is confirmed by the statement of the Muslim Chronicles, which state that the invasions on the part of the Assamese were as numerous as the inroads of the Muhammadans into Assam, which had commenced under the successors of Bakhtiyar Khilji. During the reign of Raja Khun Kamata, the Assamese under Sudangpha conquered north-eastern Bengal as far as the Karatoya.²

Subjugation of Tipam, Aiton and Khamjang territories:

Sudangpha devoted the remaining years of his reign to completing the subjugation of the Tipamia, Khamjang and Aiton tribes, whose chiefs had again refused to pay tribute. It was found that they had received encouragement from the Nara king Surumpha.³ The messengers were accordingly sent to the Nara King asking him explanation. Sudangpha warned the rebellious chiefs that he would destroy their countries if they did not pay tribute. On the other hand, Surumpha, after receiving Sudangpha's messenger, also asked these chiefs to surrender to the king of Mungdunshunkham (Assam). Surumpha sent Chaoluban in the company of Tapangmau with the presents of a white horse along with embroidered reins and saddle and some furniture to Sudangpha. In 1407, Sudangpha died.⁴ From this time onwards the Nara kings of Upper Burma very seldom caused trouble to the Ahoms, and appear finally to have dropped their claim to suzerainty.

Estimate:

Among the successors of Sukapha, Sudangpha was one of the very active

¹H.B., p-118. v.1. II.

²J.A.S.B. 1873. p-209.

³No reference in Shan chronicles.

⁴A.H.B. p-51.

and energetic kings. He achieved victory in four battles and at least in one of them, he commanded at the head of the army and received bodily injury. Under him the Ahom supremacy was acknowledged from the Patkai to the river Karatoya in Bengal. He defeated the powerful warriors of Bengal, who were more expert in military tactics. He maintained friendly relation with the Naras of Mungkang. All these facts prove that he was as great as a warrior as an administrator. His premature death was a considerable loss to Assam's history. Gunabhiram states that he was prone to pleasure and suggests that this was the cause of his early death.¹ But this is a very late version, and the older Buranjis make no reference to Sudangpha's self-indulgence. He appears to have been so energetic a warrior and administrator that the statement cannot be believed.

He built a town at Dhala, but afterwards made his capital at Charguza, on the river Dihing. His accession marks the beginning of the Brahmanical influence amongst the Ahoms. He made his capital a colony of the Brahmans and converted the tribal court of the Ahoms into a centre of orthodox Hindu culture. This king founded the 'Singarighar' festival,² which was followed by the later Ahom rulers. According to the Buranjis, he was the first Ahom king to strike coins, though none of them are now in existence. He assumed the title of 'Maharaja' and 'Rajrajesvar Chakravarti,' a favourite surname of almost every great king of ancient and mediaeval Hindu India.³

¹Gunabhiram, A.B. p-91.

²See Appendix. Glossary, p. 285.

³Barua H.K. A.B. pp-19-20.

Sujangpha (1407-1422).

Among the three sons of Sudangpha, Sujangpha ascended the throne in 1407, at the death of his father. Two new nobles, Khenpung and Nangsukham were appointed to the posts of Burhagohain and Bargohain respectively. Nothing of any importance is recorded in any of the Buranjis about this reign. Sujangpha died in 1422, leaving four of his sons.¹

Suphakpha (1422-1439).

In 1422, Suphakpha succeeded his father Sujangpha. Bargohain Nangsukham was replaced by a new chief, Langnim by name. All the Buranjis are unanimous in recording that this reign was also uneventful. Suphakpha ruled for 17 years and died in 1439.²

Susenpha (1439-1488).

Among the two sons of Suphakpha, Susenpha born of a Tipam princess ascended the throne in 1439, at the death of his father. In this reign, the Nagas of Tangshu village revolted. Susenpha marched with an army against the Nagas and a battle was fought in the hill at Banruk. The king himself led his troops in person, and routed the Nagas, but one hundred and forty Ahom soldiers were killed in this battle. The Banrukia Gohain and Parvatia Hazarika, two leaders of the Ahom army were also killed. Eventually, Susenpha succeeded in defeating all the Nagas of the Tangshu village, and as a result of this the Akhampha Nagas came to the Ahom court with a present of swords as a token of their submission.³

¹Barua H.K. A.B. p-20.

²A.H.B. p-52.

³Ibid.

The most interesting event of this reign, from the point of view of the modern historians, was the occurrence of an eclipse of the Sun. The Ahom Buranji¹ and the Deodhai Asam Buranji² state that in lakli Rungshen (1486-87), suddenly the day became as dark as night. The statement is fully in agreement with the records of H.M. Nautical Almanac office.³ This can be used as an important means to fix the chronology and the dates of the Ahom kings, and tends to confirm the accuracy of the Buranjis.

From the long duration of this reign, it can be presumed that the period was peaceful and progressive in Assam's history. A ruler of some country to the east of Assam, is said to have sent presents to this king in order to cultivate friendship with him.⁴ During the reign of this king, in 1436, the Rajah Devalaya Dai, was founded in Assam. In 1449, Sankardev, the great Vaisnavite reformer was born in the family of Kusumbar Bhuyan of the village Bardoba, in the present district of Nowgong. Susenpha died in 1488, after a reign of 49 years.⁵

Suhenpha (1488-1493).

Suhenpha succeeded his father Susenpha in 1488. A new noble, Tyaokang-banrek by name, was appointed to the post of Bargohain. The struggle with the Tangshu Nagas^{was} renewed. At the commencement of the hostilities, the Nagas routed a detachment of the Ahoms and cut off the head of the Bargohain who was the leader of the army. Next another noble Nangaranga by name was appointed to the post of Bargohain and took the command of the Ahom army.

This time the Nagas were totally defeated, and the families of Tangshu,

¹ H.B. p-52 & D.A.B. p-131.

³ See Appendix, p-

⁴ H.A. p-85. Gait gives no reference for his statement.

⁵ A.B. Gunabhiram, pp-91-92. & Barua, p-21.

Maupia and Lephara Nagas were captured and brought to the Ahom court.¹

In 1490, war broke out with the Kacharis. Chaophunlung Khampeng commanded the Ahom army and Khrungnangsheng was made the Neog (General). The combined Ahom garrison crossed the Dikhau river and encamped at Dampuk. The Kacharis fell there suddenly upon the Ahoms and pressed them hard. As a result 120 Ahom soldiers along with their Neog were killed in the battle. At this juncture, Suhenpha himself proceeded with further reinforcements to the battle-field by crossing the Dikhau, and pitched his tent on the bank of the river. He gave a stubborn resistance to the Kacharis, who were making hot pursuit of the retreating Ahoms. At last a treaty was concluded, according to which an Ahom princess was sent to the Kachari with two elephants and twelve female slaves, and in return the Kachari king ceded his territory up to Marangi to the Ahom king.²

Dr. R.C. Majumdar states that Alaud-din Hussain Shah of Bengal (1493-1519) led an expedition into Assam when it was ruled by Suhenpha. He does not mention his source. No such invasion is recorded in the Buranjis or the Muslim chronicles. Hussain invaded Kamata and sacked its capital, Kamatapur, in 1498.³ At that time, between the kingdoms of Kamata king and Sudangpha, was the territory of the Kacharis. After the sack of Kamatapur, ~~there~~ ^{was} a Muslim regime was founded, but its duration ^{was} transitory.⁴ The Muslims were kept engaged in fighting the Bhuyans, who were trying to reoccupy it, which they actually succeeded in doing in 1505.⁴ So the Muslims could not have

¹Barua H.K. A.B. p-21.

²Gunabhiram, A.B. p-92.

³See Chater V. pp. 168-69.

⁴ See Chapter V. p- 170.

advanced beyond Kamata to invade either the Kacharis or the kingdom of Suhenpha. Moreover, Suhenpha's reign ended in 1493, the year in which Hussain came to power. The hardships and difficulties encountered by Hussain after his accession are well known. It is mentioned in the Riyaz-us-salatin that Hussain invaded Kamata after his conquest of Orissa.¹ So, the statement of Majumdar is incredible. It is only in 1527, that the first Muhammadan invasion of ^{the Ahom Kingdom} took place.²

Suhenpha was assassinated in 1493, by some men of the Tairuban clan. They had been punished for stealing paddy from the royal granary, and, in revenge, stabbed the king to death with pointed bamboos, while engaged on repairs in the palace. According to some accounts the murder was instigated by Khenpung Burhagohain.³

Supimpha (1493-1497).

Suhenpha had three sons, of whom Supimpha became king on the death of his father in 1493. Immediately after his accession, he set himself to trace out and punish his father's murderers. This led to the revolt of Khenpung Burhagohain, who appears to have been suspected of complicity. He appointed a new noble, Phanlungkhampeng by name, to the post of Burhagohain by dismissing Khenpung. Another noble called Phrasengmung was made Bargohain by this king.⁴

There is a story that one of Supimpha's queens happened to see a Naga chief, who had come to pay tribute, and praised his beauty in presence of the king. The latter was so angry at this that he sent her immediately

¹Abdus Salam, pp-132-33. J.A.S.B. 1894, p-179.

²See Chater III, pp. 91-93.

³Barua H.K. A.B. p-21.

⁴Tamuliphukan, A.B. p-18.

out of the palace. The queen was pregnant at that time and in due course gave birth to a son who would become Barpatragohain, a new ^{office} ~~person~~ equal in status and rank with those of Bargohain and Burhagohain, in the next reign.¹

Though the story of the unfortunate queen, which has an important sequel, may well contain legendary aspects, it gives some indication of a further stage in the evolution of the Ahom state. The influence of the king now has reached to the remote corner of the tribal regions, and people from those areas freely visited the royal court in connection with various purposes, administrative, commercial, diplomatic and cultural. Supimpha died in 1497.

¹Barua H.K. A.B. p-22.

CLIMACTERIC OF THE EARLY AHOMS.

Suhungmung (Dihingia Raja): 1497-1539.

In 1497, Suhungmung succeeded his father Supimpha. He abandoned the old city of Charaideo, and established a new town at Chargua on the river Dihing with great ceremonials and festivities. On this occasion, he minted ~~x~~ coins which are not now available. He established a new capital at Bakata on the Dihing, after building an embankment along the river to prevent the havoc of flood during the rainy season. On account of this construction he was called 'Dihingia Raja'.¹ He had six sons. The eldest, Prince Suklenmung, was made the viceroy of Tipam, the second son, Suleng, was made the 'Saring Raja', the third son, Suteng, was given the governorship of Namrup, the fourth was given the viceroyalty of Dihing, the fifth was in charge of Tungkhlang, and the youngest prince, Sukhreng, was kept in the capital without being given any office.² The influence of Hinduism became more evident when this king assumed the title 'Svarga Narayan' and introduced the Saka Era to be used for all official purposes.³

In 1504, the Itania Nagas revolted. Nangaranga Bargohain and Khampeng Burhagohain were despatched with a big army against the rebels, who were subdued. A treaty was concluded in which the Nagas acknowledged the supremacy of the Ahom king. They also promised a yearly tribute of axes, gongs and amber. The salt spring at Longpong was surrendered to the Ahoms and the

¹Tamuliphukan K.N. A.B. p-19, Gunabhiram, p-98, & Barua H.K. pp-23-25.

²D.A.B. p-15 & Barua H.K. A.B. p-25.

³Tamuliphukan A.B. p-19.

Naga chief gave his daughter in marriage to Suhungmung to uphold their mutual relation^s. Four elephants were given by the Naga chief as dowry for his daughter. A garrison of the Ahom army was kept in the Naga territory, and a Naga chief Senglung Kanseng by name, was appointed as Barpatragohain, a newly created post equal in status to that of Burhagohain.¹ In 1498, Kamatapur having been sacked by Hussain Shah, the local Bhuyans invoked the aid of Suhungmung to drive the Muslims. Suhungmung's military operations proved successful ^{in putting an end to} the Muslim regime implanted at Kamata. In 1505, Suhung received the Bhuyans with high honour in his court, and thus established cultural intercourse which continued from now onwards on a permanent basis.²

In 1510, Suhungmung took a census of his kingdom. ^{but we are not told its population} In 1512, the king himself marched with an army to Panbari ~~territory~~ through Habung and annexed the whole region to his kingdom.³ In 1513, war broke out with the Chutias of Sadiya. The cause of the rivalry is not known. According to the statement of the Buranjis, the Chutias seem to have taken ~~the~~ the offensive. The Chutia king Dhir Narayan (or Chandra Narayan), marched with an army and a flotilla of boats to the Ahom territory and stationed himself at Dikhaumukh. Kachitara, the minister of the Chutia king, was the commander of the army. Suhungmung despatched Sukh reng along with two other generals against the enemies and in a naval encounter at Sirati, the Chutias lost heavily and were compelled to retreat. The Ahom army took possession of

¹See Chapter IV. pp. 111-12.

²Tamuliphukan K.N. A.B. p-20.

³D.A.B. p-15 & A.H.B. p-54.

Mungkhrang and a slice of the trans-Namdang region. Suhungmung ordered a township to be built in the newly acquired territory.¹

Gait contends that the Chutia king Dhir Narayan, having been defeated in this battle, invoked the aid of the Nara king, who ultimately came up to the border of the Ahom kingdom, and, after a short engagement with the Ahoms, made peace and retreated.² But he is not correct. The alleged invasion of the Ahom territory by the Nara king was an aggressive expedition and actually took place in 1524.³

In 1520, the Chutias again commenced their hostilities. They attacked the fort at Mungkhrang and killed its commander Khenmung, when the whole garrison fled. Suhungmung remained passive for the next two years and, in 1522, himself took the leadership of the army and defeated the troops near the mouth of the Sessa river. He pursued the retreating Chutias up to the mouth of the Tiphao river and erected a fort there for the consolidation of the conquered regions. Early in 1523, the Chutia king again took the offensive. He marched with a large army and encamped at Rupa. Then he laid a siege on the Ahom fort on the Tiphao, but met with stubborn resistance. Suhungmung hurried to the spot with strong reinforcements and utterly routed the enemies. A message of peace was sent by the Chutia king to Suhungmung, but in vain. The Ahom army pursued the Chutias until the latter took shelter in Kaitara hill. For sometime the Ahom soldiers were kept in check by the Chutias by rolling down the big boulders; in the meantime the Chutias ~~were~~

¹D.A.B. pp-15-16.

²H.A. pp-86-87.

³D.A.B. p-18.

regained a convenient position on the Chandan hill. At last, a contingent of Ahom troops was despatched to attack the enemies from the rear. This measure having been undertaken, the Chutias were confined on a mountain slope called Jangmungkham. Their king and his son (or son-in-law) were killed in the open battle, and their heads were presented to Suhungmung.¹ The latter fact, points to the continued prevalence of head-hunting among the Ahoms at this period, at least in a modified form. Numerous other examples of the decapitation of slain enemies are given in the chronicles relating to this period. No references to this practice can be found relating to the 17th century. We may assume that by this time it had died out owing to the influence of Hinduism.

Suhungmung annexed the whole Chutia country, and a new post in the state, known as the 'Sadiya-Khawa Gohain', was created to administer it. The first appointment was given to one Phrasenmung. In order to implant the Ahom flag permanently on the Chutia soil, Suhungmung ordered the emigration of three hundred Ahom families to the newly conquered territory. A contingent of three thousand soldiers was mobilised there under the command of the Gohain for future emergencies. The royal family and the Chutia nobles were deported to Pakarguri, while a number of Brahmans and members of the artisan classes were taken from the Chutia territory to the Ahom capital. Having accomplished all these enterprises, Suhungmung returned to the capital and performed the 'Rikkhvan ceremony'.²

¹C.B. Barua J.K. p-12. & D.A.B. pp-17-18. *Glossary*

²A.H.B. pp-57-58. For Rikkhvan ceremony, see *Appendix*, p- 285.

One engagement followed the other. In 1524, the Nara king, Phuklaimung invaded the Ahom territory ~~and~~ ^{at} the village Baradeunia and killed the frontier troops on guard with their elephants. This king is wrongly described as a Kachari king in the Ahom Buranji.¹ The name of the king does not suggest a Kachari, and the places mentioned are not in Kachari country. Therefore, we prefer the evidence of the Deodhai Asam Buranji that he was a Nara.² Suhungmung sent three of his generals with a garrison of a thousand infantry and himself followed closely behind them. At a place called Rurum, a short engagement took place in which the invaders were utterly defeated. A treaty was concluded in which the Nara king gave his sister, Nangkhandeng, to Suhungmung in marriage. Two horses were sent along with the bride. After a while, Suhung also sent an Ahom girl, Nangkhampai by name, to the Nara king along with an elephant and furniture as a token of mutual good relation.³ In the table of the Nara kings described by N. Elias, the name of the king appears as Sam-Lung-paw-maing.⁴

Elias states that the Nara king Chau-ka-pha (1493-1520), planned the conquest of Assam, but on his arrival at the border he was offered large presents of cattle and horses by the Ahom king, when he retired peacefully.⁵ But nothing is mentioned about this in the Buranjis. Gait apparently believes that both accounts are the different versions of the same incident.⁶ ~~But~~

¹A.H.B. p-58.

²D A.B. p-18-19.

³Ibid.

⁴H.S. p-45.

⁵Ibid. p-41.

⁶H.A. pp-86-87.

But we cannot agree with him. He is not correct in the date of the invasion. According to the Deodhai Asam Buranji,¹ it occurred in 1524, and not in 1513, as given by Gait. The Nara king Chau-ka-pha's reign ended in 1520.² So he could not have invaded Assam at a later date. The invasion must have been undertaken by Chau-ka-pha's successor Sam-lung-paw-maing (of which the name given in the Buranji, Phuklaimung, seems to be a corruption), and the result was the defeat of the Naras with heavy losses.

After subduing a number of Bhuyans on the frontier territory,³ Suhungmung engaged himself in the internal administration of the kingdom. In 1526, he promoted Mungtao, a Miri soldier, perhaps for his efficiency and loyalty. Another noble named Mungklang was appointed as Bargohain and posted at Dihing. Three other soldiers also received promotion. A chief of the royal blood was posted at Tungkhlang as Gohain.⁴

In December, 1526, Suhungmung, along with one of his sons, marched against the Kacharis and ascended the river Dhansiri to Barduar, where some constructions were made to receive reinforcements. Next the king ordered a fort with brick-walls to be built at Marangi. Then Suhung^{mung} led an army to Dergaon to join his naval reinforcements. An engagement took place there with the Kacharis, in which ~~the~~^a contingent of the Ahoms, consisting of forty soldiers along with their leader, were killed. The Kacharis advanced up to the village Agarkatia. Three Ahom generals marched with their divisions

¹D.A.B. p-18.

²H.S. p-45.

³Bhuyan S.K. A.B. pp-12-13.

⁴D.A.B. p-19.

to check the advance of the Kacharis, who were routed with considerable casualties. Next the Kacharis attempted another engagement on the fort at Marangi, but met with crushing defeat. One thousand and seven hundred Kachari soldiers were killed in the field of battle while their commander escaped on horse-back.¹

In February, 1527, a fresh rebellion took place in the Chutia country. Mungklang, the Dihingia Bargohain, was despatched to reinforce Phrasengmung. Ultimately the rebellion was suppressed, but the Dihingia Gohain lost his life at the hands of the rebels. Next Thaomung Bangen was appointed as an additional 'Sadiya-Khawa gohain' and his jurisdiction was extended from Kangkham to the source of the Luhit. Suleng, the second son of the king, was posted as viceroy over the Dibru region. Kanseng was honoured with a new title 'Tao Senglung',²

Suhungmung hardly could have finished his diplomatic measures by transferring and appointing important officials on the eastern frontier, ~~when~~ ^{then} his attention was drawn towards the west. In the same year, 1527, the first Muhammadan invasion, mentioned in the Ahom Buranji took place. The name of the Muhammadan general is not known, but he is mentioned as 'Bara Ujir' (Chief Minister or Commander-in-chief). This invasion seems to have been a naval raid accompanied by efficient cavalry. Near the river, Burai, an engagement between the Ahoms and the Muhammadans occurred, in which the latter had to retreat after a heavy defeat. Forty horses and twenty

¹D.A.B. pp-19-20.

²A.H.B. pp-60-61.

cannon were captured by the Ahom soldiers. Suhungmung, in expectation of further raids of this kind, took some precautionary measures. He himself stopped at Sala and despatched a battallion to take possession of Duimunisila. A fort was erected at the end of the Burai river and a garrison was mobilised at Phulbari.¹ This is the earliest reference in the Buranjis to cannon,; from this time they are often mentioned, and it appears therefore that their use quickly spread among the Ahoms.

In connection with this Muslim invasion, Bhattacharyya says that "Assam was unsuccessfully invaded by Alau-d-din Hussain Shah soon after the conquest of Kamarupa, probably in 1493, at least, earlier than 1497 A.D., the first regnal year of the Dihingia Raja".² He further states that the expedition was led by Ruknu-d-din Rukn Khan, the Vizier and general of Alau-d-din Hussain Shah.³ For the latter he quotes the authority of an inscription dated 918 A.H. 1512 A.D., and commemorating of the construction of a building, discovered at Sylhet.⁴ We have already suggested the inconsistency of Bhattacharyya's first contention on the authority of the Riyaz-us-Salatin, that Hussain Shah invaded Kamata in 1498, after his military engagements in Bihar and Orissa.⁵ In 1493, Hussain was heavily engaged

¹D.A.B. pp-21-22. & A.N.B. pp-66-68.

²M.N.E.F.P. p-87.

³Ibid p-86.

⁴J.A.S.B. 1922, p-413.

⁵See Chapter, V, pp. 168-69.

with his internal administration, clearing away the legacy of anarchy left by the Habshi regime, the fact of which Bhattacharyya does not mention. As to his second contention, we have sufficient in the inscription to show that his presumption is incredible. The inscription records that " this building (has been erected by) Rukn Khan, the conqueror of Hasht Gamhariyan, who being Wazir and general for many months at the time of the conquest of Kamru, Kamata, Jaznagat and Urisha, served in the army in several places in the train of the king."¹ The inscription does not mention anything of Hussain's expedition to the Ahom territory, but it only clearly indicates that Rukn Khan was one of the Generals or Wazirs of Hussain in the campaign against Kamrup or Kamata. He also accompanied Hussain in his other military expeditions to Jaznagar and Orissa. It was only in the beginning of the 17th century that Kamru or Kamata formed an integral part of the Ahom dominion.² So the Bara Wazir or Bara Ujir of the Buranji ~~cannot~~ and the Wazir of the inscription cannot be identical. Moreover, the statement of the inscription that Rukn Khan was a general of Hussain in his Orissa and Jaznagar campaigns, shows ^{the} improbability of Bhattacharyya's first contention that Hussain invaded Assam unsuccessfully in 1493, the year of his accession.

In December, 1529, there were again signs of a rising in the Chutia country. This time the policy of moderation to pacify the rebels by peaceful means gave good results. It appears from the Buranjis that Phrasengmung, the Gohain himself, was connected with the plot. Ultimately he was produced

¹J.A.S.B., 1922, p-413.

²H.A. p-110.

before the king at the capital, was pardoned on account of his previous ~~service~~ service, and was transferred to another post of the administration.¹

In 1531, the Ahom fort at Marangi was reconstructed. Khunkara or Khuntara, the Kachari king, took the news of this very seriously and despatched an army under the leadership of his brother Detcha or Neocha, who was killed by the Ahoms in the field of battle. The Ahoms followed the retreating Kacharis and killed a large number of them. Suhungmung himself proceeded up the Dhansiri with a large army and encamped at the junction of the Dayang. A night attack was made on a near by Kachari town (Hika). Then the Ahom ~~soldiers~~ soldiers arrived at Dengnut and two divisions of them were sent through both the banks of the Dhansiri. An engagement took place on the river bank in which the Kacharis were defeated and driven to their capital at Dimapur. The Kachari king Khunkara and his brother fled to Mantara or Kakat. A Kachari ^{prince} ~~king~~ Detsung or Neochung by name was enthroned on the Kachari kingdom as a vassal king. The new king presented his sister in marriage to one of the Ahom princes with numerous gifts and presents.²

As soon as the Kachari struggles were successfully handled, the second phase of the Muhammadan hostilities ensued. One Luipat or Luput advanced up the Brahmaputra with fifty vessels. An engagement took place at Temeni in which the Muslims were defeated, their commander having ~~been~~ escaped on horse-back. The Ahoms reconstructed their forts at Kangaripara and Sala on the river Bharali. The fort at Kangaripara under the command of Senglung

¹A.H.B. pp-62-64.

² Ibid. pp-64-66. & D.A.B. pp-24-26.

Barpatragohain was next attacked by the Mussalmans, who were led at that time by a new general, Bit Malik or Mit Manik. This time also the Muslims met with disastrous defeat, their general met his death on the battle-field. Fifty horses and many cannon and guns of the Bengali soldiers were captured by the Ahoms. Suhungmung then rewarded the Ahom soldiers according to their service in the last battle. Early in 1532, a new fort was erected at Temeni under the supervision of Senglung.¹

In April, 1532, a Muslim commander, Turbak, encroached upon the Ahom territory with one thousand horses, thirty elephants, many guns and cannon and other weapons. They encamped at Singiri opposite to the Ahom fort on the bank of the Brahmaputra. Suhungmung sent Suklenmung with a large army to Singiri and himself advanced to Sala. Suklen^{mun} became impatient and without enforcing the rear strongly, crossed the Brahmaputra and gave a vigorous battle to the enemies. On this occasion fortune forsook the Ahom general. With ^{an} innumerable number of the Ahom infantry, eight of their commanders were killed in battle. Suklen^{mun} himself made a hair-breadth escape with a severe wound. The Ahoms then retreated to Sala, where reinforcements were received and Senglung was made the Commander-in-chief. The Muslims made an advance and encamped at Kaliabar.²

On the assumption that the last Ahom defeat was mainly due to their weakness in naval power, Suhungmung ordered a strong navy to be prepared. In June, seven hundred ships were made ready for operation by the Ahoms.

¹A.H.B. pp-66-68. & D.A.B. pp-26-27.

² Ibid. pp-68-69. & Ibid. pp. 27-30.

This time the Kachari army also joined the Ahoms. In October, the Muslims took up a position at Ghiladhari. In November, Suklenmung recovered from his wound and assumed the command of the Ahom forces at Sala, on which the Muslim soldiers made an attack. They set fire on the houses outside the fort but were routed on a surprise attack by the Ahoms. Next the invaders attacked with cavalry and artillery and put the whole Ahom troops into confusion. The elephants in the fore-front having been unable to withstand the enemies, the whole Ahom army was repulsed with considerable loss. In a few subsequent encounters also the Muslims fared well and maintained their advance very cautiously. But in March, 1533, the wheel of fortune turned in favour of the Ahoms. In a naval engagement near Duimunisila, the Ahoms succeeded in gaining a great victory against their enemies. The Muhammadan commanders, Taju and Sangal, were killed, together with a large number of ordinary soldiers. 2500 men of the invaders lost their lives in the Ahom land. They also lost 20 ships and a number of big guns.¹

In the meantime, Hussain Khan, another Muslim general, came to reinforce Turbak with six elephants, 100 horses and ~~1000~~ infantry. He mobilised his forces at the mouth of the Dikrai river, while the Ahom army was garrisoned on the opposite side. Both parties waited for a favourable moment for entrenchment. At last the Ahoms took ^{the} initiative under the leadership of Senglung, attacked and defeated the ⁱⁿ enemies in several engagements. The final defeat of the Mussalmans took place in a battle near the Bharali river. Turbak and Hussain Khan met their death in the field of battle,

¹A.H.B. pp- 69-70.

when the Muslim soldiers began to retreat. The Ahom soldiers followed closely on the fugitives as far as the river Karatoya. 26 elephants, 850 horses, a great number of cannon and matchlocks together with other booty were captured by the Ahoms. The Ahom commander constructed a temple and excavated a tank on the point of their last advance with a view to perpetuate the memory of their victory. The heads of Turbak and Hussain Khan were entombed on the Charaideo Hill.¹

As the above invasions are not mentioned in the Muslim chronicles, Gait contends that these were undertaken not by the Sultan of Bengal but by some local Muhammadan chiefs or freelance of the outlying territory.² But the quantity of soldiers, arms and ammunition, especially the cannon, give us ~~the~~ the idea that the local chiefs could not possess them. We are rather inclined to think that these were undertaken by some powerful Sultan like that of Bengal. The absence of a record of these invasions in the Bengal chronicles may be due to the disinclination of the Muslim chroniclers to record their disastrous defeats.

In 1535, the Nagas of the villages, Malan, Pangkha, Khaokha, Lukna, Taru, ~~and~~ Pahuk, Khamlong, Shileng and Shireng joined together and revolted against the Khanjania Gohain. Next the Nagas of Jukhang also joined the rebels. Suhungmung despatched some of his generals with their divisions of troops to fight the rebellious Nagas. The Khanjania Nagas were soon overpowered, when they acknowledged the Ahom supremacy by presenting 100 methons. Soon after the whole region was brought to order.³

¹A.H.B. pp. 69-73 & D.A.B. pp. 28-32.

²H.A. p. 94.

A.H.B. pp. 73-74 & D.A.B. pp. 32-33.

In 1536, the Kachari king Neochung or Detsung showed signs of hostilities. A large army was sent ~~to~~ and Suhungmung himself accompanied them up to Marangi. Then a portion of the Ahom army was despatched to Banphu through Hamdai. There the whole army was divided to proceed up both the banks of the Dayang river. Some of the Ahom generals ascended the river in ships and besieged the Kachari fort at Banphu. The contingent which marched along the right bank of the river, defeated the Kacharis who resisted them ~~and~~ ~~but~~ on the left bank the Ahoms, after receiving reinforcements, inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Kacharis. ~~or~~ Detsung, the Kachari Raja took shelter in the fort at the hill Daimari. He collected a flotilla of boats there and advanced through the Khamdam river. After an engagement with the Ahom naval force on the river Nantima, he fled to Lengnut and thence to Dimapur, his capital. The Ahoms followed the Kacharis up to their capital and captured Detsung's whole family. Detsung himself fled to Jangmara where at last he was caught and beheaded. A gold umbrella, a silver umbrella, a gold sofa, a silver sofa and a considerable quantity of gold and silver were collected by the Ahoms, as spoils of battle. Suhungmung annexed the whole Dhansiri valley along with the Kachari possessions up to the Kalang river in the Nowgong district.¹

In December, 1537, the Koch king Visva Singha along with his brother Sib Singha came to the Ahom court and offered valuable presents to Suhungmung. In the same year, there ^{was} ~~were~~ exchange of envoys and gifts between the Manipuri king and the Ahom king. Suhungmung is said to have met his death in 1539, as a result of a conspiracy plotted by Suklenmung, his eldest son.²

¹A.H.B. pp.73-77. & D.A.B. pp.32-35.

² Ibid. pp.77-78. & Ibid. p-35.

The reign of Suhungmung was one of the most eventful and important reigns of Assam's history. Suhungmung was an energetic, enterprising and tactful ruler. During his rule the Ahom supremacy extended to all directions. The Chutias were subdued for good and their country was annexed to the Ahom kingdom. Suhungmung showed another mark of genius by his thoughtful measures of transfer of population of the Ahoms and the Chutias between their countries. Great credit lies in his selection of a Naga chief as the Barpatragohain, one of the highest dignitaries of the Ahom administration. He also deserves appreciation for his moderate and mild policy ⁱⁿ ~~to~~ handling the Naga affairs. The influence of the Kacharis over the Dhansiri valley was checked by him for ever, and the Kachari capital at Dimapur was sacked ~~by~~ him. He created the post of Marangi-khawa-gohain, to administer the Dhansiri valley, a post which was to continue up to the end of the Ahom rule. To ^{add to} ~~summarize~~ his achievements, it ^{was} ~~is~~ in the reign of Suhungmung that three Muhammadan invasions were successfully resisted and defeated. One Nara campaign was faced victoriously. The powerful Koches under Visva Singha acknowledged the Ahom supremacy.

There was an epoch-making change in ~~the~~ the social history of the country at this time. The people were divided into clans and ~~the~~ artisans were imported from the Chutia country and elsewhere. The Saka Era was introduced for the first time to replace the system of calculating the dates by the Jovian Cycle of Sixty years.

From the strategic point of view, this reign was most important. Under Suhungmung, the Ahoms became the most powerful nation of the whole of north-eastern India. The Ahoms under Suhungmung could claim at last, victory everywhere in all their engagements.

In the religious history of the country, this reign had an equal importance. Apart from the increasing influence of the Brahmanism, it witnessed the spread of ^{the} Vaisnava reformation founded by Sankardev.

Economically this ^{reign} ~~can be~~ ^{may be} considered as the beginning of a new regime in which increasing wealth and prosperity were bestowed on the ordinary ~~people.~~ ^{people.} A census of the country was taken to improve the efficiency of the administration. The reign of Suhungmung thus can be considered as the climacteric of the early Ahoms.

Suklenmung or Garhgaya Raja (1539-1552).

In 1539, Suklenmung ascended the Ahom throne. He established a new capital at Garhgaon and for this reason is known as the 'Garhgaya Raja'. For the first few years of his reign, he engaged himself in consolidating the administration of the newly acquired Kachari country. The Bhuyans of the Kapili valley seem to have shown signs of hostility towards the Ahom regime. But they were soon brought under the ~~control~~ of direct rule of the capital.¹

In 1542, there was a Chutia rising, but the most decisive event of this reign was the ^{initiation} ~~engagement~~ of a series of hostilities with the Koch king, Nara Narayan. In 1546, a large expedition of the Koches under the leadership

¹A.H.B. p-79.

of the king's brother and commander-in-chief Chila Rai or Sukladvaj, advanced along the north bank of the Brahmaputra as far as the Dikrai river, where it was resisted by the Ahoms. A fierce battle took place in which many Ahom generals and ordinary soldiers were killed while fighting the ~~the~~ invaders. At last, the Ahom soldiers took a stand at Kharanga and thereafter marched to Kaliabar. In the meantime, reinforcements of the Ahom army arrived at Sala, where again the Koches assumed ^{the} initiative. After a long and continuous battle the invaders were overpowered. Some of them fled to the forest, some to the ships, and many leaders lay dead ^{on} ~~into~~ the battle-field. The routed Koch army retreated along the bank of the Brahmaputra until they reached the border of Kamrup. With the beginning of the new year, the Koches showed again signs of aggression by erecting a fort at Narayanpur. Suklenmung mustered his troops and took up a fortified position along the bank of the Pichla river. The line of communication of the Koches having been cut, they realized that they were in immediate danger and attempted to storm the Ahom fortifications. But they met a reverse and were repulsed with a heavy loss, the casualties being large. The Ahoms got possession of a number of horses and weapons of the enemies. This victory enabled the Ahoms to regain their lost territory. Suklenmung returned to the capital and performed a Rikkhvan ceremony.¹

In 1549, the Banphia Nagas were attacked by the Banchungias, when the former brought the trouble to the notice of the Ahom king. An expedition

¹A.H.B. pp.79-81. & D.A.B. pp.37-38.

was sent against the Banchungia Nagas, who were defeated. A large quantity of booty in buffaloes, methons and coral was captured~~x~~ by the Ahom soldiers, while the leader of the Nagas was made a prisoner. Suklenmung died in 1552.¹

Suklenmung was a brave general. He himself participated and played important role in almost all the battles during his father's reign. He ~~defeated~~ ~~conquered~~ the powerful Koches and conquered rebellious Bhuyans. He was the first Ahom king to mint coins, which are still in existence.² In the reign of Suklenmung, the tank of Garhgaon was excavated and an embankment^{placed} round the capital; ~~was constructed~~ and the Naga Ali, ~~an embankment~~ ^{a high road} running from Bar Ali to the Naga hills through the Gadhulibazar mouza, and the embankments at Kahikuchi and Changinimukh^{also} were constructed.³

Sukhampha or Khora Raja (1552-1603).

Sukhampha succeeded his father in 1552. Having hurt a leg while hunting he was called 'the lame king' (Khora Raja).⁴ Soon after his accession, there was a conspiracy in the palace against him by the princes of the royal blood. All of them were captured and confined. But ultimately on the intercession of the nobles of the court they were pardoned.⁵

In 1555, an expedition was sent against the Nagas of Hatikhok, Iton, Papuk and Khamteng. The Ahom soldiers succeeded in defeating the Nagas after a short skirmish. There were few casualties on either side. One hundred methons were captured by the Ahoms as spoils of battle.⁶

¹A.H.B. p.82.

²Botham, Catalogue of the Prov. Coin Cabinet, Assam, Allahabad, 1930, p.452.

³Tamuliphukan, A.B. pp.23-24.

⁴Ibid. p.24.

⁵A.H.B. p-82. & D.A.B. p.40.

⁶Ibid. pp.82-83. & Ibid.

One of the important activities of Sukhampa after his accession, was his military help to the Nara King against the Burmese, who had invaded the Nara kingdom. As a reward, he received the hands of the Nara king in marriage.¹ It is mentioned in the Shan chronicles that in the 30th year of the reign of the Nara king, Chau-Sui-Kwei (surnamed Chau-peng), in 1556, a Burmese army despatched by the king of Henthwadi (Pegu), invaded Mogaung and conquered it. ~~Evidently~~ The Nara princess who was married to Sukhampa appears to have been the daughter of Chau-Sui-Kwei.²

In 1559, the forgiven princes rebelled for the second time and were properly punished ^{by execution.} In 1560, a Bhuyan, grand-son of Pratap Rai, along with Salu Bhuyan and others, invaded the Ahom territory and encamped on the mouth of the Dikhau river. Three generals with their battallions were immediately despatched by the Ahom king to attack the invaders at their halting point. A sortie took place, in which the invaders were defeated and their leaders were slain.³

The precedent of the last invasion alarmed the Ahom king. With a view to check the further aggression from the west, extensive fortifications were made at Boka and Sala and some other places in the frontier region. In 1562, hostilities broke out with the Koches. Tipu or Tepu and Bukutunlung or Bhakatmal ~~crossed the Ahom frontier with~~ two Koch generals, crossed the Ahom frontier with a large army and arrived at Sala. Thence they ascended the Brahmaputra with a flotilla of boats and arrived at Dikhaumukh. A naval

¹Gunabhiram, A.B. p.99.

²Elias, H.S. p.42.

³A.H.B. pp.83-84. & D.A.B. p.40.

battle took place there in which the Koches, though at the first engagement, they were forced to retreat to the mouth of river Handia, ultimately succeeded in routing the whole Ahom army. Four Ahom generals lay dead on the battle-field, while one became a prisoner in the hands of the enemy.¹ It would appear, however, that they did not immediately succeed in advancing further.

In January, 1563, the Koches again ascended the Brahmaputra with a large army as far as the Dikhaumukh. This time Sukladvaj or Ghila Rai, the younger brother of king Nara Narayan, took the leadership of the army. After a decisive battle, the Koches were victorious. The Ahom capital at Garhgaon was evacuated. The king and his nobles took shelter at Klangdai in the Naga hill area. The Koches first made their camp at Majuli and thence entered Garhgaon, the capital.²

After three months a treaty was concluded. The Koches withdrew from the capital when the Ahoms acknowledged the Koch supremacy and the tract up to Narayanpur on the north bank of the Brahmaputra was ceded to the Koch king. A number of sons of the nobles were sent to the Koch capital as hostages. A war indemnity of 60 elephants, 60 pieces of cloth and a large quantity of gold and silver was given to the Koch King.³

In the month of August, the Ahom king returned to his capital. Next he engaged himself in repairing the damage caused by the Koches. Aikhek, the Burhagohain, was dismissed on the charge of gross neglect of duty during

¹ A.H.B. pp. 84-85. & D.A.B. p. 41.

² Ibid. pp. 86-87. & Ibid. pp. 41-42.

³ Ibid. pp. 88-89. & Ibid. pp. 44-45.

the last Koch operations. A chief, Kankham, was appointed as the Burhagohain and strict injunctions were passed to reorganize the military affairs in such a way that any future invasion should be successfully resisted. A fort was constructed on the bank of the Dikhu river. Next Narayanpur was recovered from the Koches and soon afterwards some military constructions were made at Sala. A bund was constructed at a place called Sina.¹

In January, 1564, a section of the discontented Chutias rebelled and raided some territory at Namrup and Kheram. The Governor of Tipam was directed to punish the rebels but his attempts gave no result. Next Rup Handik, the Burhagohain, was sent with a large force to suppress the rebellion. The Burhagohain fought with the rebels, defeated them, and captured the leader along with a large number of Chutias.²

In February, 1564, Paman or Paban, the Dhekeri king, who appears to have been a Bhuyan, invaded a portion of frontier territory on the west. He was attacked and defeated at Murabhag on the river Brahmaputra. A great number of the Dhekeri soldiers were killed and many fled away. The Dhekeri king himself fled away on a horse, leaving his elephant, on the back of which he ~~was fighting~~ had been fighting, to be captured by the Ahoms. A large number of elephants, horses and guns fell upon the hands of the Ahom soldiers.³ This is the first occasion on which the Buranjis mention the Dhekeris. This is a term generally used for the people of lower Assam. It would seem that at this period the inhabitants of the districts Darrang and Kamrup were also called Dhekeris.³

¹ A.H.B. pp.88-89. & D.A.B. pp.44-45.

² Ibid. p.89. Ibid. pp.45-47.

³ Ibid. p.90. & Ibid. p.46.

⁴ Gunabhiram, A.B. pp.9-10.

In March, 1564, an expedition was sent against one Bhela Raja, who also appears to be a Bhuyan. In a sortie the chief was defeated and captured. In middle of the same year, the Koch general Tepu again ascended the ~~B~~ river Brahmaputra and encr^oached upon the Ahom territory. We have already seen that just after the withdrawal of the Koch army from the Ahom capital, the supremacy of the Koches was challenged. The last remnant of the Koch sovereignty ^{over Ahom territory was lost} ~~was denied~~ when Narayanpur on the north bank of the Brahmaputra was recovered from the Koches. Evidently the Koch invasion represented a further attempt to assert Koch suzerainty in the Ahom land. But fortune had left them in the meantime. The whole Koch army was defeated when their leader Tepu was killed in the battle. Some of the Koch soldiers were captured but many fled. After this defeat at the end of the year, Nara Narayan, the Koch king, released all the Ahom hostages in the Koch court to encourage good relations with Sukhampha.¹ It is popularly believed that Nara Narayan in the course of a game of dice with the hostages offered them their release as a stake. He lost the game and the hostages were sent back accordingly.² There is no need to believe this story. No doubt the defeat of the Koches at the hands of the Ahoms, led Nara Naryan to make friends with the Ahom king.; such friendship was no doubt doubly necessary to enable him to resist the Muslim ruler of Gaur. A good number of artisans and skilled labourers accompanied the Ahom hostages on their return to their own country.³

¹ A.H.B. pp.90-91. & D.A.B. pp.46-47.

² Barua H.K. A.B. p.35.

³ Ibid. p. 35.

In 1569, an expedition was sent against one Phusenta, who was defeated and fled to Papuk, when his family was captured. In 1571, two Naga chiefs, Pungban and Pungkhru rebelled. A battallion of the Ahom troops was sent, as a result of which the hostile Nagas were subjugated. In 1572, there was a rising of the Muttaks, a term used in the Buranjis synonymously with the Morans or Moamarias. On the approach of the Ahom army, their leader fled to Kanchai, where the Ahom soldiers captured him. Then the Kachai king along with a great number of the Muttaks were captured and produced before the king. In 1573; the Itania Nagas revolted. An expedition was sent to suppress the rebellion. The Itanias were routed and the families of their chiefs were made captives. Next the Naga village of Kheram was occupied by the Ahom soldiers.¹

It is mentioned in the Ahom Buranji that in 1575; the Nara king invaded Ahom territory at Khamjang.² The name of this ^{King} is not mentioned. We do not find mention of this invasion in the Nara chronicles. But it is stated that Mogaung Tsaubwa, Chau-ka-pha II (1564-83), was a very powerful ruler.³ We have seen already that the Nara kings, though ^{they had} ~~have~~ given up their claim to suzerainty ^{over} ~~upon~~ the Ahom throne, could not altogether abandon the tendency ^{to} ~~of~~ occasional raids into the Ahom territory.⁴ So it may not be unreasonable to suggest that Chau-ka-pha II was the Nara ruler referred to in the Buranji as campaigning against the Ahom king. It is recorded in the

¹ A.H.B. pp.90-92.

² Ibid. p.92.

³ H.S. p.42.

⁴ See pp.89-90.

Buranji that in 1575, on the entrenchment of the Naras near Khamjang, a large Ahom force was mobilised at Pangrao, but soon afterwards a treaty was concluded. According to the treaty, the Nara king gave his sister in marriage to one of the Ahom princes. It is mentioned there that the Nara king received 1000 gold mohurs from the Ahom king.¹ From the condition of the treaty it appears that the Ahoms must have shown such courage and heroism that the Nara king was inclined to give his sister's hand to the Ahom prince to avoid conflict, though the tribute paid to him shows that he was not defeated. No Buranji mentions any actual engagement on this occasion.² But fighting at last did occur in 1577, after a lapse of two years. This time the Nara king entered the Ahom kingdom through Itan, a disorderly Naga village. The Naras ~~devastated~~ are said to have devastated the provinces of Ruram, Kheram and Namrup. Immediately a large army of Ahoms was sent to resist the invaders. On the right bank of the river Sessa, after long and fierce fighting, the invaders were routed. A great number of the Naras were killed. Their king fled from the battle-field and took shelter on a hill. The Ahom soldiers took possession of many horses, elephants, swords and shields of the invaders.³

In 1576, just at the eve of the Nara operations, a fierce horde of Naga tribesmen, under the leadership of one of their chiefs, encroached upon the Ahom territory, killed 26 soldiers in a skirmish, and occupied the territory up to Longpong, where there were salt springs. But later on

¹A.H.B. pp. 92-93. & D.A.B. pp. 48-49.

² Ibid. Ibid.

³ Ibid. Ibid. pp. 49-50.

in a treaty they surrendered their absolute right of using the salt springs of the area.¹

In 1579, one Nangchanphe alias Tumphe, the son of one Shengkhru entered into the Ahom territory and stopped at Namrup. An army was immediately despatched to resist the raiders. Near Pangrao they were overpowered and routed.² We are given no information as to the origin or status of this raider, but his name and the district which he invaded, suggest that he was a Shan.

In 1584, the Koch king Raghu Dev gave his sister Saakala or Sasikala in marriage to Sukhampha in order to cultivate his friendship. Two elephants twelve horses accompanied the Koch princess as her dowry. Soon afterward Sukhampha presented Raghu Dev with 22 elephants and 60 horses in return.³

The succeeding 19 years of Sukhampha's reign are hardly mentioned in the chronicles. We must assume that they saw little or no military activity. The most dangerous potential enemy of the Ahoms, the Koches, were heavily involved in family strifes and dissensions on the one hand, and political rivalry with the Muslims of Bengal on the other. Raghu Dev, the eastern Koch king, was no doubt glad to remain at peace with the Ahoms, and his son, Parikshit, retained the Ahom friendship even in the succeeding reign of Pratap Singha, to whom also a Koch princess was given in marriage.⁴ Sukhampha, now an elderly man, was no doubt content to hold his frontiers and end his reign in peace. It may well be that his forces assisted Raghu

¹ Dhekialphukan H.R. A.B. pp.55-56.

² A.H.B. pp. 93-94.

³ Ibid. p.94.

⁴ Ibid. p.97.

Dev in his dogged resistance to his enemies on the western and southern frontiers. Sukhampha, evidently a most energetic and able ruler, maintained the power of the Ahoms, repelled invaders, and raised the importance of his house. It is regrettable that the chronicles tell us next to nothing about the individual character of the Ahom kings. Of Sukhampha the only personal trait recorded is that he was very fond of sport and hunting. But from the achievements of his long reign we must assume that he was a king of great ability and force of character.

Sukhampha died in 1603 and was succeeded by his son Pratap Singha, who is referred to regularly by his Hindu name, in preference to his Ahom name Susenpha. The earlier kings had no Hindu titles, but were satisfied to rule with ~~Ahom names only~~ their Ahom names only. Thus the death of Sukhampha marks a ^{further} stage in the Hinduization of the Ahoms. Moreover from this time forward the Mughals, strongly entrenched in Bengal, made constant attacks on Ahom territory and largely changed the pattern of the Ahoms' military activity. Thus the death of Sukhampha marks the end of a period in the history of Assam.

CHAPTER IV.

AHOM ADMINISTRATION.

The Ahoms introduced a new system of government. While we have a good deal of information about their administration in the 17th and 18th centuries, little is said in the Buranjis about the government of the early Ahom kings. We may believe however, that by the end of our period the system of government had already assumed something of the shape it possessed when Assam fell to the British.

The king was the virtual head of the state but was assisted by a council of Gohains or great nobles. He was not only the owner of the land but also the master of his subjects. He could grant or sell both.¹ In the early period, the succession to the throne was from father to son but in later days there were irregularities.² Sometimes brothers or distant relatives got preference to the sons or near relatives. Though many of the kings were no doubt despots, the majority of them were not tyrannical and apparently governed according to traditional precedent. The person of the king was considered sacred.³

Next to the king, there were originally two Gohains, the Burhagohain, (senior noble), and Bargohain (great noble). In the reign of Suhungmung, a new post, Barpatraghain, similar in dignity and power to the above two was created. The most competent of the nobles served as the Chief Minister of the state, but the rank of all three was always looked on as equal. The king was bound by custom to consult the gohains on all important matters, such as war or negotiations with other countries. He was not considered to

¹Gunabhiram, A.B. p.285.

² Ibid. p.289.

³ Ibid. p.285. A.B. pp.18-20.

have been legally enthroned unless the Gohains had concurred in proclaiming him the king. The functions of the Gohains were always advisory, but the king could not generally disobey their united resolutions. If one of the Gohains was found guilty of serious crime, the king with the approval of the other nobles could sentence him to death. But there are several instances of kings behaving very leniently to the rebellious Gohains, and they were apparently often so influential that the kings thought it inadvisable to punish them severely even when they were untrustworthy or inefficient. ~~Three~~ great Gohains do not appear to have had any sharp division of functions, corresponding to the ministers of state in other systems. The office of the three Gohains was the monopoly of three particular families or clans. The appointments ordinarily descended from father to son, but the king could exercise his power in choosing any member of the family.¹

Under the three chief Gohains, there was an officer called Barbarua, who was responsible for justice and was also in charge of agriculture. Though he was above some of the Gohains in rank, he was not generally given this title. He was fifth in power and position, after the king and the three great Gohains.² The Sadiya-khawr-gohain, (asaka in charge of the Marangi-khawa-gohain, and the Salal Bargaohain, were the next higher officials of the administration. Their functions and responsibilities were confined to the provinces of which they were the governors. At Kajalimukh, there was a Gohain called Kajali-mukhia-gohain. His functions and responsibilities were identical with those of other governors of the provinces. There was another gohain in the capital, called Jalid Gohain without special duties. Below the

¹ Dhakialphukan H.R., A.B., pp. 18-20.

² Barua Gunabhiram, A.B., pp. 285-86.

gohains in rank there was a class of nobles known as Phukans. The first six were called Chara⁺Phukans. Of these six officials four had special responsibilities. The Naobaicha Phukan was the head of the royal navy. The Bhitara Phukan used to supervise the household affairs. The Dihingia Phukan was posted on the river Dihing. The Pani Phukan was in charge of the waterways. There were two other Phukans called Naphukan (new Phukan), and Deka Phukan (Junior Phukan). These two had no special duties. All the six Phukans were under the direct supervision of the Barbarua.¹

There were twelve Rajkhowas (governors) in the twelve different provinces of the kingdom. Their functions and responsibilities were confined to the administration of the provinces under their control, and each was provided with three thousand paiks (foot soldiers). The Rajkhowas were assisted by one Phukan and one Barua in every province.²

Next to the above there were some ordinary Phukans entrusted with particular duties. The Parvatiya Phukan, the Raidangia Phukan and the Khangia Phukan were engaged ~~with~~ⁱⁿ the service ~~to~~^{of} the queen, the queen-mother and the princesses. The Tamuli Phukan was the supervisor of the royal garden. The Naosaniya Phukan was in charge of the construction and repair of the royal navy. The Ch³ladhara Phukan was in charge of the royal robes and garments. The Chiring Phukan supervised the Deodhais and the Bailungs (royal priests). The Devaliya Phukan was in charge of the temples and

¹Dhekialphukan, A.B. pp. 20-21.

²Gunabhiram, A.B. pp. 286-87.

⁺ Chara, the king's private apartment.

religious places. The Jalbhari Phukan was the leader of the royal hunting party. The Kharghariya Phukan was in charge of arms and amunitions.¹

There were some Baruas allotted with particular departments. The treasurer was called Barabhandar Barua or Bharali Barua. The Bej Barua was the palace physician ~~in~~ and Changmai Barua was the head of the royal kitchen.¹ ~~One~~ Likhakar Barua was the superintendent of the scribes engaged in writing the Buranjis. The Gandhiya Barua was in charge of the Buranjis, records, letters, despatches and maps preserved in a set of apartments maintained in the palace.²

Three types of lower grade officer mentioned in the chronicles were Katakis(ambassador), Kakatis (accountants), and Khaunds(traders). The function of the Katakis was to maintain contact with foreign countries. The Katakis were the accountants of the production and expenditure of the royal farms. The function of the Khaunds was to import foreign goods ^{for the court}.³ There were also scholars and astrologers in the court.³

The officials of the state were not entitled to a monthly or yearly salary. Under each of them was a district or subdivision, from the income of which they used to receive a certain percentage which is not specified in our sources. They were supplied with Paiks for service. The viceroy of the district could appoint and dismiss the petty officials under him.⁴

¹Gunabhiram, A.B. pp.286-87.

²~~Barua~~ ^{Bhuyan} S.K., Studies in the literature of Assam, Gauhati, 1956, pp.9-10.

³Gunabhiram, A.B. p.288.

⁴ Ibid.

Military System:

Ahom military organisation consisted of infantry, cavalry, elephants and navy. Martial Paiks or Peasants were given land on service tenure. They were grouped under the different heads. The leader of twenty paiks was called Bora, of over a hundred ^{or more,} Saikia, and of a thousand, Hazarika. The Commander-in-chief of the army was called Neog Phukan.¹ The main weapons of the war were swords, spears, bows and arrows. The soldiers were trained to stand firm on the battle-field.² The leader of the cavalry was called Ghora Barua and of the elephants Hati Barua.³

The use of incendiary weapons was known to the people of mediaeval Assam. But firearms were first introduced in the beginning of the 16th century. The Ahom troops soon became expert in making various kinds of guns, small and big, matchlocks, artillery and big cannon.⁴ The officer in charge of the manufacture of gun-powder was called Kharghariya Phukan.⁵

The most important and powerful division of the Ahom forces was the navy. The main war-boats were called bacharis. This in shape resembled the kosahs of Bengal and each could carry 70 to 80 men. They were of durable and strength and many of them at the end of our period were mounted with guns. The Fathiya-i-ibriya gives the number of ships belonging to the king of Assam at the time of Mir Jumla's invasion as 32,000.⁶ These were mainly made of chambal wood and thus were light. They were speedy and not

¹Gunabhiram, A.B. p.288.

²Shihab uddin Talish, Fathiya-i-ibriya, J.B.O.R.S. Vol. I.1915. p.192;

³Gunabhiram, A.B. p.286.

⁴Shihab uddin Talish, Fathiya-i-ibriya, J.B.O.R.S. 1915, p.192.

⁵Gunabhiram, A.B. p.286.

⁶Fathiya-i-ibriya, J.B.O.R.S. B.1872, p.81.

easily sinkable.¹ The Naobaicha Phukan and the Naosaniya Phukan were the heads of the navy.²

For armed resistance, a large number of forts were erected at strategic centres. The Ahom soldiers were skilled in overpowering the enemies by night-attack. A very small number of Ahom soldiers could often checkmate thousands of the enemies in the battle-field. Besides their numerical strength, the physical vigour, courage and endurance of the Ahom paiks were the most decisive factors in the military invincibility.³

Land Tenure:

The system of land tenure in mediaeval Assam was a peculiar one. Taxes were levied upon the subjects in respect of the land given to them. Each individual tenant was styled Posa-paik and was allowed two puras of land. Three to four paiks were collectively called Got-paik and were liable to give service during the year in rotation. If any paik were unable to fulfil their duties, the king could claim damages. The Paiks who regularly fulfilled their prescribed duties to the king paid no tax. Members of the Abhijatya classes or gentlemen were theoretically entitled to hold two to three puras of land, for which they used to pay a tax called Gadhan (body-tax), which was in place of military service; in practice many members of the Abhijatya class possessed much larger holdings. The land not held by the paiks or abhijatyas was called Ubarmati. This was looked on as royal property and was generally farmed by tenants-at-will, who

¹Shihab-uddin Talish, Fathiya-i-ibriya, J.A.S.B., 1872, p.81.

²Gunabhiram, A.B., p. 237.

³Shihab-uddin Talish, Fathiya-i-ibriya, J.B.O.R.S., 1915, pp. 186 & 192.

paid heavier dues than the other classes. There was also land given to the Brahmans by the king (Bamunbhalmanuhajama), which paid revenue at a lower rate than the Ubarnati. Besides this there was a good deal ^{of} land donated to religious causes, called variously Brahmatra (land gifted to Brahman), Debatra (land given to persons of a religious calling whatever ^{their} ~~his~~ class or order), Nankar (land given to Sudras of religious order), and Dharmatra (land gifted on account of Dharma). All these were free of taxes.¹

Law and Justice:

After the Hinduisation of the Ahoms from about the beginning of the 16th century, Hindu law was generally followed. But during the early period customs and ^{the} discretion of the judges formed the criterion ^{of} ~~for~~ justice. There was no fixed or written law. The joint family system was in existence. The punishments were severe. ~~The~~ Copper plates were used as a means of registration. Cases both criminal and civil were decided in the same court. Record was maintained only ^{of} ~~for~~ the civil cases.²

The Barbarua was the head of the judicial administration. Trials were generally conducted before subordinate judges, but appeal could be made to the chief justice or the king. As a highest authority of the appeal, the sovereign was assisted by the Nyaya-khoda-phukan. There were kakatis and pandits in the court whose opinions were considered before the decision. The village-elders used to decide ~~their~~ petty quarrels and disputes according

¹Dhekialphukan, A.B. Chap.II. pp. 1-6. Chap. III pp. 9-14.

²Ibid. Chap. II. pp. 10-14.

to ~~the~~ social customs and precedents. The Superintendents of the subdivisions of the provinces (khels or mels) acted as justices over the issues under their jurisdictions. The social distinction of the class and caste system were guaranteed by the state. The administration of justice appears to have been efficient, speedy and impartial.¹

¹Dhekialphukan, A.B. Chap. II. pp. 10-14.

PART II.THE NON-AHOMS.CHAPTER V.THE KINGDOM OF KAMRUP OR KAMATA.

In the early part of the Christian Era, there was a big and powerful kingdom in the north-eastern part of the Indian sub-continent called Kamarupa.⁺ The Mahabharata and the Puranic and Tantrik literature mention of it very frequently. It is mentioned in the Kamrupar Buranji that the kingdom stretched westward from the river Karatoya to the Dikrai in the east and from the mountain of Nandasaila on the north to the Brihagachala in the south so that it included roughly almost the whole region of the Brahmaputra valley besides Rangpur, Bhutan, Kochbehar, Mymensingh and the Garohills.¹ By the beginning of the 13th century, the boundary between Kamrup and the Muslim territory of Lakhnawati was the river Karatoya or Begmati as mentioned by Minhaj.² The Gachtal inscription unearthed in the present district of Nowgong shows that the eastern boundary of the kingdom was up to that region.³

The history of mediaeval Kamrup after the rule of the Pala line of kings is as obscure as disconnected. No inscriptions or coins, nor any contemporary comprehensive historical account of this period has yet been discovered. The Muslim chronicles prove to be pious frauds when confronted with more authentic evidences given by the Buranjis and other indigenous

⁺ We have not retained the Sanskrit spelling throughout our thesis, as in mediaeval times the kingdom was called Kamrup or Kamata.

¹ K.R.S. p.97.

² T.N. transl. Raverty, pp. 560-61. & J.A.S.B. 1873, p. 211.

³ I.H.Q. XXII. p.13. Inscription issued in 1227, records that king Visvasundaradeva ordered one Chandrakanta to repair the damage done by the Mlechchhas to the temple of Siva.

sources. But their contribution is nevertheless valuable in decorating ^{with} ~~the~~ detail ^{the} history of the land. Having fixed our eyes on the basic points of agreement among all these sources and using a certain amount of legitimate historical imagination from the analogy of the history of other peoples, we attempt a framework to the construction of the history of mediaeval Kamrup.

The Kamrupar Buranji and the local Puthis, unlike the Ahom chronicles, do not mention dates chronologically. We have, therefore, been compelled to estimate the dates of the Kamrup kings very roughly by allowing from 20 to 25 years per king counting from the fixed dates of the Muslim invasions mentioned in the ~~Tabakat-i-Nasiri~~ Muslim chronicles.

According to the Tabakat-i-Nasiri, which is confirmed by the Kanai Varasi Rock Inscription of North Gauhati,⁺ the ruling king of Kamrup at the time of Bakhtiyar's invasion, was Bartu or Prithu.¹ Haig has shown that this Prithu was no other than a Kamrup king, who not only defeated Bakhtiyar but also Hisan Uddin Iwaj (Sultan Ghias Uddin) in 1227, and was finally dethroned by Nasir Uddin, the son of Iltutmish, in 1228.² The above invasion of Sultan Ghias Uddin is recorded in an inscription unearthed at Gachtal in Nowgong, which indicates that the invader went up to that region. It was issued in 1227, and records that king Visvasund-

+ Sake Turagayugmesē madhu-māsa-trayadaśe Kāmarūpaṃ-samāgatya Turuṣkaḥ kṣayam āyayuh. (turaga=7, yugma=2, śa=11). On the 13th of Chaitra (27th March) in the year Saka 1127 (A.D. 1205), the Turks coming into Kamrup were destroyed

K.S. Intro. p.44.

¹ N. pp. 560-64, & 628-29.

² C.H.I. Vol. III. pp. 50-54.

aradeva ordered one Chandrakanta to repair the damage done by the Muslims to the temple of Siva.¹ Chowdhuri suggests that Visvasundaradeva and Bartu or Prithu of Minhaj are identical.² It is mentioned in the Kamrupar Buranji that one Jalpesvar built the Siva temple of Jalpesvar in Jalpaiguri.³ The same source mentions that Jalpesvar was another name of Prithu the Kamrup king.⁴

From his long reign and the fact that he repulsed two Muhammadan invasions, it appears that Prithu was a very powerful ruler. It is mentioned in the Buranji that he was a king of a different line from that of the old kings of Kamrup.⁵ We know that from the second quarter of the 12th century, Kamrup was ruled by a new line of kings, the founder of which was Vaidyadeva, who came from Bengal.⁶ Prithu must have been a descendant of either Vaidyadeva or Vallabhadeva, who ruled Kamrup at the end of the 12th century.⁷ We cannot agree with Ray, who contended that Vallabhadeva was king when Bakhtiyar invaded Kamrup.⁸ It is mentioned in the Tejpur Copper-plate inscription that in the year Saka 1107, corresponding to A.D. 1185, a grant of land was made by a ruler named Vallabhadeva.⁹ ^X The Kanai Varasi Rock

¹Bhattachali N.K. New lights on the history of Assam, I.H.Q. XXII. pp.12-14.

²Chowdhuri P.C., H.C.P.A., p. 422.

³The statement is confirmed in the Yogini Tantra, which is not available to us. (See H.C.P.A. p. 423).

⁴K.R.B. p. 98.

⁵Ibid.

⁶E.H.K. pp.190-94.

⁷H.C.P.A. p.420.

⁸Ray H.C. The Dynastic History of Northern India, Vol. I. Calcutta, 1931, p.260

⁹E.H.K. p. 197.

Inscription shows the date of Bakhtiyar's invasion as 1205, and the Tabakat-i-Nasiri records that the ruling king of Kamrup at the time of the said invasion was Prithu.¹ Chowdhury suggests that the reign of Vallabhad~~eva~~ ended shortly after 1185.² So the contention of Ray appears untenable. The above mentioned Kanai Varasi Rock Inscription proves the fact that the capital of Prithu was at '~~Kamrupanagara~~' '~~Kamarupanagara~~' mentioned in the second inscription of Dharmapala, near present North Gauhati.³

From the statements recorded in the Tabakat-i-Nasiri, it becomes evident that it was not Bakhtiyar's intention to cause bad relations with Prithu, rather he wanted to make friends with him, perhaps in the hope of military aid, which he deemed necessary in connection with his expedition to Tibet. Evidently Prithu wanted to help him, which fact was communicated to Bakhtiyar by a letter, with the condition that he must postpone the idea until the next year. When Bakhtiyar disregarded the counsel of Prithu by refusing to give up the plan and proceeded on his journey, Prithu was enraged and decided to attack the Muslim army on their return.⁴ He removed the flat stones of the platform of the bridge on ^{the} Barnadi,⁵ ~~in his kingdom~~ and rendered it impassable. Then he blocked the road in the rear of Bakhtiyar and cut off his supplies. With a view to preventing the soldiers of Bakhtiyar from obtaining provisions, Prithu caused their whole route inside his kingdom to be laid waste with fire.⁶ The Muslim chronicler adds that

¹ See pp. 120-21.

² H.C.F.A. p.420.

³ K.S. pp. 44 & 177.

⁴ T.N. pp. 561-64.

⁵ See pp. 123-24.

⁶ T.N. p.568.

when Bakhtiyar was held up at the bridge, his troops were not strong enough to resist the Hindu archers, who attacked them in the open field. The Muslims thereupon took shelter in a nearby temple. This Prithu surrounded with a bamboo stockade. The Muslims succeeded in breaking through the lines of their besiegers, but many were drowned in attempting to cross the river, and, out of 10,000 cavalry, it is doubtful whether hardly 100 followers of Bakhtiyar returned ~~back~~. The rest were captured ~~by them~~ and slaughtered by the Kamrupi soldiers. Bakhtiyar personally escaped capture by the Kamrupi king, but died shortly afterward from fatigue and mortification.¹ From the description of the encounter between Bakhtiyar and the Kamrupi king, it appears that Prithu was a brave warrior and knew of military tactics exceptional in India, which proved most effective in defeating the Muslim general, who had previously conquered Bihar, Bengal and Orissa.

Bhattacharyya contends that Bakhtiyar crossed the Karatoya by the bridge, and did not enter the territory of Kamrup at all but passed along its western frontier only.² But we cannot agree with him. There was never a bridge on the Karatoya. Had there been any, it must have been mentioned ^{accounts of} in the later Muslim invasions of Kamrup, on ~~each of~~ ^{each of} the course of which, the Karatoya had to have been crossed, being the border between the two kingdoms. The author does not appear to have followed The Tabakat-i-Nasiri, the only contemporary source, carefully. Bakhtiyar followed the course of the river Tista, and nearing the hills crossed it by fording. There he was

¹T.N. pp. 569-73.

²M.N.E.F.P. p. 53.

told that a more direct route to Tibet or China lay to the further east. He, therefore travelled eastward within Kamrup over the high road leading from Jalpaiguri to eastern Assam. On this road he crossed the stone bridge to the north-west of Gauhati. The bridge then spanned the Barnadi which, running through the present abandoned bed known as the Puspabhadra, fell into the Brahmaputra several miles below its present confluence.¹ Bakhtiyar then followed the course of this river towards the north and reached the foot-hills near about Kumrikata on the Bhutan border which is due north of Gauhati. This Kumrikata ^{was} ~~is~~ probably the place mentioned as Kararpatan or Karampatan.² His return journey was also the same. It is, therefore clear that Bakhtiyar's army actually penetrated into Kamrup and ~~was~~ ^{was} destroyed not far from its capital.

It is mentioned in the Tabakat-i-Nasiri that, in 1227, Sultan Ghiyas-uddin Iwaj invaded Kamrup with an enormous army, when the ruling king was still Prithu. The Muslim chronicle gives a very scanty account of the second ~~expedition~~ invasion. According to Minhaj, Iwaj led his army from Lakhnawati towards the territory of Bang and Kamrud.³ This shows that the route of this expedition was the same as that of Bakhtiyar. Gait contends that Iwaj undertook his expedition to Assam through the river Brahmaputra by boats.⁴ He never informs ^{us of} ~~his~~ source. But his statement does not appear correct. After the invasion of Bakhtiyar, Prithu fortified the cities of

¹ E.H.K. pp. 212 & 220.

² T.N. pp. 566. 67.

³ Ibid. p. 594.

⁴ H.A. p. 37.

Rangpur and Jalpaiguri, at the western frontier¹ of his kingdom adjacent to the territory of Lakhnawati, with extensive fortifications and embankments, the reason of which must have been to give effective resistance to the further inroads of the Mussalmans from that direction. As to the return of the army of Iwaj, it is mentioned in the Tabakat-i-Nasiri that whether part of or whole of his army returned with him is doubtful,² and does not record that Iwaj succeeded in reaching the capital of Kamrup in North Gauhati.² *without mentioning his manuscript source,* Gait³ states that Iwaj was defeated and driven back.³ So it is evident that Iwaj had been defeated by Prithu on the very outskirts of ^{his} territory after many of his soldiers being either killed or captured. The territory of Lakhnawati could not at that time touch the river Brahmaputra, which was inside the boundary of the kingdoms of Prithu and the later Sena rulers of East Bengal.⁴ So the contention of ~~Gait~~ Gait that Iwaj ascended ~~through~~ the Brahmaputra is incredible. During his retreat from the Hindu kingdom, Iwaj suffered such heavy losses that he was unable to resist Nasir-Uddin, son of Iltutmish, the Delhi Emperor, at Lakhnawati. The Muslim general escaped the capture^p ~~of~~ ^{by} the infidels only to meet his death at the hands of his co-religionists.⁵

Minhaj made the following reference to Prithu or Britu: "The accused Bartu(Britu), beneath whose sword above a hundred and twenty thousand Mussamans had attained martyrdom, he (Nasir-uddin) overthrew and sent to

¹B.D.R. Vol. I. p.8.

² ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ T.N. p. 594.

³H.A. p. 37.

⁴ T.N. p. 558.

⁵ Ibid. p. 595.

hell; and the refractory infidels in different parts of the country of Awadh, he reduced and overcame and brought a considerable number under obedience." ¹ From the above statement it appears that Nasir-Uddin defeated and killed a Hindu chief called Bartu or Prithu. Raverty stated that "who this Hindu chief was we have no means of discovering, I fear, as other subsequent writers do not notice these events at all. He is styled in some of the best copies as above, which is probably meant for Prithu." ² Haig declared that this Britu or Prithu was no other than the Hindu king of Kamrup, "who had until that time defeated the Muslims on every occasion on which they had attacked him." ³ From a critical examination of the above statements, it becomes evident that Prithu must have been a Kamrup king. We cannot agree with Bhattasali who contends that "Prithu must have been a man of Audh and not of Kamarupa!" ⁴ There are several arguments against this. For one thing it is unlikely that a Hindu chief of Audh, which was fairly strongly held by the Muslims, would be able to cause such great trouble to them. Moreover Bhattasali does not appear to be aware of the fact that the Kamrupar Buranji mentions that king Jalpesvar of Kamrup was also known as Prithu. ⁵ We have shown that Jalpesvar was a powerful king and was responsible for the first defeat of the Muslims. ⁶ The above passage of Minhaj evidently refers to two separate exploits of Nasir-Uddin: firstly to his defeat of Prithu, and secondly to his reduction to obedience of the infidels of Audh. There is no special reason for believing that the one

¹ T.N. pp. 628-29.

² Ibid. p. 629(F.T.)

³ C.H.I. Vol. III. p.54.

⁴ I.H.Q. Vol. XXII. p. 6.

⁵ See p. 121.

⁶ See pp. 121-22.

was in any way connected with the other.

From the following statement of Haig, we can find out the date of the end of the reign of Prithu, the Kamrupi king: "Mahmud now governed Bengal as his father's (Iltutmish) deputy and made the most of an opportunity which ~~was~~ closed by his ~~early~~ death in April, 1229, for he ~~defeated~~ and slew Raja Britu, possibly the Raja of Kamrupa."¹ It is , therefore evident that Nasir Uddin Mahmud attacked and ~~defeated~~ killed Prithu ~~after~~ in the year 1228, after overthrowing Iwaj from the governorship of Lakhnawati sometime before his death.

After a personal visit to the ruins ascribed to Prithu in the districts of Jalpaiguri and Rangpur, Buchanan remarked that " this Prithu Raja from the size of his capital and the numerous works raised in the vicinity by various dependents and connections of the court, must have governed a large extent of country and for a considerable period of time."² Glazier mentioned Prithu as a very powerful king of Kamrup and ascribed to him the construction of extensive fortifications in the present districts of Jalpaiguri and Rangpur.³ Firminger remarked on the sites of the ruins of Prithu's constructions that " the ruins of his city lie half in Chaklaboda, half in Pergunah Bykunt pore in the present district of Julpigoree. The city consisted of four enclosures, one within the other; the innermost containing the Raja's palace. In both the inner and middle cities were subdivisions, separated from each other by by ramparts and ditches, dividing each city

¹C.H.I. Vol. III. p.54.

²Martin, Eastern India, Vol. III. p.406.

³Report on the District of Rangpur, p. 8.

into several quarters. The outermost city of all was tenanted by the lowest classes of the populace. The palace was strongly fortified for the times in which it was built; the defences were lofty earthen ramparts with wide moats on the outer sides and advantage was taken of a small river, the Talma, to form a deep fosse under the embankment between the middle and outer cities. In some places the earthen defences were faced with brick and surmounted by brick walls; the Raja's house had also a wall around it. The only remains left are portions of the ramparts and heaps of bricks in various places."¹

We have already mentioned that these extensive constructions were undertaken by Prithu after Bakhtiyar's invasion by that route in order to be in a strong position to give effective resistance to the further Muhammadan invasions at the very entrance of his kingdom. Depending upon a local tradition of Rangpur, Buchanan stated that Prithu met his death by throwing himself into a tank when his capital was captured by the army of the untouchables.²

This seems to refer to the invasion of Kamrup by Mahmud Nasir-uddin in 1227-28, and the death or capture of Prithu at the hands of the Muslim army.

We can gain an idea of the wealth and prosperity of the kingdom of Kamrup early in the 13th century from the writings of the contemporary Muslim chroniclers. Minhaj stated that in course of their flight, during their retreat from Assam in 1206,³ the Muslim soldiers took shelter in an "idol temple in the vicinity of that place of exceeding height, strength and sublimity, and very handsome, and in the numerous idols both of gold

¹ B.D.R. Vol. I. p.8.

² Martin, Eastern India, Vol. III. p.406.

³ See p. 123.

and silver were deposited and one great idol so(large) that its weight was by conjecture upwards of two or three thousand mans (one man is equal to 80 lbs) of beaten gold."¹⁺

The history of mediaeval Kamrup is that of progress and prosperity. Though the feudatory chiefs or Bhuyans became occasionally virtually independent of each other, they had ^{no} feuds or dissensions with the central government in the capital. Their readiness to combine immediately against a common foe reminds us the chivalrous poli/cy of the heroes of mediaeval Hindu India. Sarkar, in describing the history of mediaeval Bengal under the Mamluks (1227-87), remarked that " the fortune of Islam at that period was at a standstill, and the Muslim power of Lakhnawati suffered relative decay in comparison with the Hindu powers in Kamrup."² In the various kingdoms of mediaeval India, the Muslims always gained the upper hand. But in the east they only took second place beside the contemporary Hindu power of Kamrup. So the statement of Vasu on ~~the~~ Kamrup's history that " the invasions of Rampala, Kumarapala, Vijoyasena, Ballalasena and Lakshmanasena had rendered the country very weak,"³ does not appear true. We shall show later that at least two of the later Kamrupi kings took the title 'Rajrajesvara', which indicates very considerable power.

+ But no trace of this gigantic image of gold is to be found now in the temple of North Gauhati, identified with that mentioned by Minhaj. The weight given by Minhaj seems almost incredible; we must assume that in fact the image was gilded.

¹ T.N. p. 569.

² H.B. pp. 42-43.

³ S.H.K. Vol. I. p. 241.

Although we have some accounts of the conflicts of the Kamrupi kings with the Muslims of Bengal, there are very few or no records from which to work out a connected account of the history of Kamrup from the beginning of the 13th to the early 16th century, when the Koches came to rule the country. The Kamrupar Buranji, the Rajvamsavali and the Buranjis by Haliram and Gunabhiram, give a list of Kamrupi kings, which is not in ~~the~~ chronological order; moreover many of the rulers do not appear to have ruled in the above period. But the list of kings recorded in the Guru Charitra by Ram Charan Thakur, seems to be very much ^{more} useful for constructing an authentic history of the land.

It is mentioned in the Guru Charitra that there was a king named Sandhya who became the Gaudesvar. His son and successor was Sindhu Rai who assumed the title 'Rajrajesvar'. This king was succeeded by his son Rup Narayan whose fame spread to other countries. The son and successor of Rup Narayan was Singhadhvaj, whose minister was a Kayastha, Pratapadhvaj by name, whose father was one Laharia. Pratapadhvaj killed king Singhadhvaj and himself became the king. He had a son named Durlabh Narayan by his queen Prabhavati.¹ But the chronicle ~~does not~~ mentions neither the dates nor ~~the~~ location of the country. There is another chronicle, Katha Charitra,² which is very much helpful in this connection. It records that there was a king in Kamatapur named Durlabh Narayan who was contemporary to Chandibar, the great-great-grand-father of Sankardev, the Vaisnav~~ya~~ reformer, who

¹ E.H.K. p.245-46, based on Ram Charan Thakur's Guru Charitra, of which a copy is not available.

² Gunabhiram, A.B. pp. 48-51.

was born in 1449.¹ Prithu erected enormous fortifications on the western borders of his kingdom to check the further Muhammadan inroads from that direction.² Some of his successors must have removed the capital from North Gauhati to Kanatapur, a few miles distant from the present city of Kochbehar, for reasons with an eye to the Muslims. We have no record of serious trouble from the Ahoms, who were at this time establishing themselves firmly on the eastern ~~border~~ part of Assam. The change of capital, therefore, probably had no connexion with the Ahom invasion of Upper Assam. It is mentioned in the Persian chronicles that in the 14th and 15th centuries, the Kamrupi kings were called 'Kamesvar'. The Buranjists mentioned them as 'Kamatesvar'. So it is evident that the predecessors of Durlabh Narayan in the royal line were surely the Kamrupi kings. Allowing an average of approximately 20 to 25 years for each of the four fore-fathers of Sankardev and the five predecessors of Durlabh Narayan, we can fix the reign of Sandhya in the middle of the 13th century.

Sandhya. (c.1228-60).

In 1228, Prithu was killed by Malik-us-said Nasir-ud-din Mahmud Shah, who placed the son of the deceased king on the throne on condition of tribute.³ The victor having retired from the country, this Kamrup king stopped the payment of tribute and assumed independence. The Muslim sources do not mention the name of the successor of Prithu. We have already observed that at the middle of the 13th century, Sandhya was the king of Kamrup, The

¹See p. 81 above.

²See pp. above, 124-25.

³T.N. p. 628.

Guru Charitra shows that Sandhya was the ruler when in the year, 1254-55, Tughril Khan Malik Yuzbeg, also known as Sultan Mughiz-ud-din, invaded Kamrup.¹ Chowdhury suggests that Prithu and Sandhya were the descendants or successors of Vaidyadeva or Vallabhadeva.² Though there is no definite evidence to this effect it seems a very reasonable hypothesis. Like the Muslim sources, the indigenous chronicles also do not record the name of the king before Sandhya and after Prithu. Under the circumstances, Sandhya can be considered as the successor of Prithu.

In 1229, Nasir ud-din, the Bengal governor, died,³ when Sandhya drove away the Muslims from the country and brought the whole region up to the Karatoya, under his direct supervision. Next he made preparations to invade Gaur, the Muslim territory, to avenge the previous invasions of Kamrup by the Muhammadans. The whole history of the Mamluks in Bengal from the second quarter to the end of the 13th century, is a ~~scene~~^{story} of usurpations and murders, internal dissensions and civil wars. At the same time the Hindu nobles in Kamrup under a new name, 'Bhuyan', joined forces to strengthen the country against the Muslims. Simultaneously, there appeared another setback in the fortune of Islam by the rising of a new Hindu power under a great leader named Dasaratha Danuja Madhava of Chandradvipa, who controlled the greater part of east and southern Bengal. But by far the most direct and effective blow to the growth of the Muslim power in Bengal at that time, was the rivalry of the great eastern Ganga empire of Orissa. A feudatory

¹E.H.K, p.250.

²H.C.P.A. p.203.

³See p. 127 above.

of the Gangas from Jajpur on the banks of the Vaitarani river became a regular ^{terror} ~~dread~~ to the Muslims and forced them to concentrate on guarding that frontier at the cost of the other.¹ So at this juncture, which was most unfortunate for the Muslim ruler of Lakhnawati, the Hindu Kingdom of Kamrup with its enormous military power under the leadership of the powerful Bhuyans, and with its most ambitious ruler Sandhya, avenged herself of her previous losses at the hands of the Muslim invaders. Sandhya invaded the eastern border of the kingdom of Gauda and annexed certain trans-Karatoya regions to his own dominion without any strong resistance from the conquered. Next he assumed the title "Gaudesvara".² This period was one of the most eventful of Assam's history, as at that time Sukapha, the founder of the Ahom dynasty in Assam, entered the eastern part of Upper Assam after crossing the Patkai mountain.

It is mentioned in the Tabaquat-i-Nasiri, that in Hijri 655, corresponding to A.D. 1254/55, Malik Yuzbeg determined to march upon Kamrup, and despatched a great army across the river Bagmati (or Karatoya).³ Barua says that the invasion by Malik Yuzbeg was undertaken because the then Raja of Kamrup, stopped payment of the tributes.⁴ But this is not true. We have already shown that Sandhya stopped the payment of the taxes long before this time, just after the death of Nasir uddin in 1229. In our view the probable reason of this invasion was to avenge Sandhya's annexation of the trans-Karatoya region and his assumption of the title "Gaudesvara". Fisher says

-
1. H.B. p.43.
 2. See ~~Chapter~~ p. 130.
 3. T.N. p. 764.
 4. E.H.K. p. 228.

that Yuzbeg entered Kamrup by way of Sylhet and Cachar.¹ But he is wrong. At that time the whole of east Bengal, along with the above region, was under the rule of the descendants of Lak^smanasena and other Hindu rulers.² Sark^ar says that Sultan Mughisuddin Yuzbeg crossed the river Karatôya somewhere near Ghoraghat in the Rangpur district and marched through the modern Goalpara district along the northern bank of the Brahmaputra river.³ This appears to be correct because the Muslim hold at that time was limited only in Lakhnawati. Raverty says that the Kamrup capital at that time was Kamatapur.⁴ But he is not correct because three coins minted by Malik Yuzbeg at Lakhnawati in A.H. 653, A.D. 1252/53, were found at Gauhati in 1880.⁵ These are considered to be part of the loot obtained from some of the soldiers of Yuzbeg, captured by the Kamrup king. Moreover, the Kanai Varasi and Gachthal inscriptions prove that Kamatapur was not the capital of Kamrup, up to the first half of the thirteenth century. Thus it appears that the city of "Kamrud" invaded by Yuzbeg was no other than the present North Gauhati or its immediate vicinity, which was named as "Kam^arupa Nagara" by the Pala line of kings. So the contention of Cunningham that Kamatapur must have been the capital of Kamrup ^{from} in the seventh century is wrong.⁶ We shall show later that it was Sandhya who, after defeating Yuzbeg in 1255, shifted his capital

1. J.A.S.B. 1840, p. 840.

2. H.B., Vol. I, p. 226/27, Vol. II p. 54.

3. Ibid. Vol. II, p. 53.

4. T.N. p. 764.

5. J.A.S.B. 1910, p. 621.

6. Majumdar, S.N., Cunningham's Ancient Geography of India, Calcutta, 1924, pp. 573-39.

from North Gauhati to Kamatapur.

It is recorded in the T.N. that "Malik Yuz-Bak took the city of Kamrud and possessed himself of countless wealth and treasure, to such extent, that the amount and weight thereof cannot be contained within the area of record."¹ From this it can be presumed that the kingdom of Kamrup at that time was very prosperous and rich. Gait states that the Muslims for a time were successful and celebrated their conquest by erecting a mosque.² Bhattacharyya goes a step further and contends that the Muslims tried to reestablish the Islamic faith in the conquered land on a solid basis.³ But this appears to be an altogether unwarranted surmise. Gait never informs us of his source and the erection of a mosque is not mentioned even by the Muslim historians. Bhattacharyya refers to p. 73 of Gunabhiram's Assam Buranji, which does not give the above facts. Bhattacharyya also likewise does not confirm his statement. However, in p. 66 of Stewart's history, it is said that a mosque was built, but the author does not quote any authority to substantiate his statement, which may have been based on a tradition of local revo maulavis, maulavis, which could hardly be accepted, since such traditions are usually very unreliable. The T.N. states that Khutba was read in Kamrup, and "signs of Islam" appeared there during the Muslim invasion, but nothing is said about the building of a mosque or forcible conversion. Khutba is regularly read on Fridays by all Muslims, and it would be surprising if the invaders did not do so. It may be a fact that ⁱⁿ at the ~~very~~ first instance the invaders may have

-
1. T.N. p. 764.
 2. H.A. p. 37.
 3. M.N.E.F.P. p. 56.

temporarily occupied the capital evacuated by the Kamrup soldiers, but that does not mean that the Muslims got full possession of the city, for they were all the while hotly engaged in fierce fighting with the innumerable Kamrup soldiers, who were armed with bows and arrows. In this connection it may be opportune to state here the singular system of fighting of the Kamrup army. They never give very strong resistance at the first advance of the enemy, but attack effectively from the rear. We have already seen that in a similar way Prithu attacked and defeated Md. Bin Bakhtiyar in 1205/6. The same fate awaited our present invader also. We have already shown that Bhattacharyya incorporated some vague facts in his book. Here also we meet with some more false statements. He says of "the resistance given to this invader by Sandhya" that the reigning king, who was feeblehearted, dared not fight the Muhammadan invader, and fled away from the capital leaving him an easy victor.¹ This statement seems biased; Bhattacharyya calls the king "feeblehearted," who destroyed the invading army to a man and captured the Sultan Yuzbeg with all his children, family and dependents.²

T.N. refers this connection to a legendary anecdote "that from the reign of Gushtasib, Shah of Ajam who had invaded Chin, and had come towards Hindustan by that route (by way of Kamrud),[†] twelve hundred hoards of treasure, all sealed, which were deposited there, and any portion of which wealth and treasures not one of the Raes had availed himself of, the whole fell into the hands of the Musalman troops. The reading of the Khutbah and Friday religious service were instituted in Kamrud, and signs of the people of Islam

1. M.N.E.F.P., p. 56.
 2. T.N. p. 764-66.

appeared there. But of what avail was all this, when the whole from frenzy, he gave to the winds. "For the wise have said that the seeking to perform overmuch work hath never turned out fortunate for the seeker."¹ The last portion of the paragraph speaks of its own lack of historicity. Yuzbeg is compared to a legendary king, for whom there is no historical basis; and his exploits are held up to the reader as giving moral lessons in the failure of overweening ambition. The actual basis of the statement seems to be the enormous wealth and treasure of the kingdom of Kamrup. On the commencement of the rainy season, the Kamrupi soldiers rose in arms on all sides, cut off supplies to the city, and seized the plains and waterways. The Sultan caught hold of a guide who undertook to conduct his army by a shorter route through ^{the} submontane tract, evidently by way of Kochbehar and Jalpaiguri, in the direction of Devkot. When the Sultan had retreated several stages, and entered the defiles and jungles, he ^{was trapped} ~~was put~~ in a narrow ^{valley} ~~place~~ assailed by the Hindus on all sides. In an engagement there, the entire Turkish army surrendered and the Sultan with all his children, family and dependents became captives in the hands of Sandhya, the Kamrupi King.²

It is mentioned in the T.N. that the Muslims got immense spoils and booty in this invasion.³ But on a careful study of the source it does not seem so. As long as the Muslim army was in the capital, it was kept engaged in fighting with the expert archers of the Kamrup army. Soon afterwards the Muslims being unable to withstand the local forces, had to retreat. Everybody knows the

-
1. T.N. pp. 764-66
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.

story of their disastrous return journey. Moreover, if the campaign was a profitable one, it is surprising that it is not mentioned in another source of Muslim history, the *Riyas-us-salatin*, which in other respects closely agrees with T.N. Therefore we cannot agree with Minhaj's presumption. It is no doubt a fact that the invaders gathered certain booty at their first entrance into the capital, but to no avail. Sandhya immediately ordered his soldiers to surround the capital and cut off the further supplies of the enemy. In the meantime the invaders started their retreat. The Kamrup forces followed them. After a short journey the Muslims were forced to defend themselves against the Hindus along a narrow road in a mountain pass. After a decisive engagement on the slope of a hill, the grand army of Malik Yuzbeg was entirely defeated and killed. Yuzbeg himself with his son became a captive in the hands of the Kamrup king. Yuzbeg received serious wounds, on account of which he breathed his last in the presence of his son. Sarkar says of this Muslim expedition that "the Kamrup disaster broke the spell of the invincibility of Turkish arms with the Mongoloid tribes of Koch and Mech, and started them on a new career of political greatness that affected the history of Medieval Bengal very deeply for the next three centuries."¹

Following the Muslim historians, who say that Malik Yuzbeg, in order to avoid the flooded country, retreated along the slopes of the hills and was defeated by soldiers of the Kamrup king in a defile, Barua says that "he (Yuzbeg) was retreating from Gauhati along the foot of the Khasi hills and the Garo hills in the direction of Mymensing."² But this is not correct. We

-
1. M.H.B., Vol. 11, p. 54.
 2. E.H.K. p. 232.

have already seen that at that time the whole of East Bengal from the border of Kamrup was under ~~the~~ Hindu rulers. The slopes of the hills mentioned in the T.H. were shallow mountain ranges along the northern bank of the river Brahmaputra, within Kamrup. This is the view of J.H. Sarkar.

At this time a most significant event in the history of Kamrup took place. To check the further inroads of the Mussalmans, Sandhya shifted his capital from North Gauhati to Kamatapur, a few miles distance from the present city of CoochBehar. This place had more strategic importance than the old city of Kamrup Nagara. From now onward the Kingdom of Kamrup was called 'Kamata' and the king designated as 'Kamatesvar'. It seems probable that this occurrence took place immediately after the defeat and death of Malik Yuzbeg in 1255. We have shown already that the theory that Kamata was the capital at an earlier period is not tenable.

We cannot agree with Barua when he says that the removal of the capital by Sandhya in 1260 was necessitated by the menace of the Kacharis and also by the fact that Gauhati was then easily accessible to raiding Muslim invaders from the Direction of Sonargaon.¹ At that time the Kacharis were no doubt the immediate eastern neighbours of the Kamata King, but it is also a fact that by 1260, they were not in a position to encroach ^{on} ~~with~~ the peace and prosperity of the Kamata Kingdom. The Ahoms, under their powerful leader Sukapha, by that time, occupied a vast tract of the Brahmaputra valley and were maintaining a ^{policy} ~~one~~ of annexation and integration. The Kacharis themselves were in a ^{too} circumscribed position to maintain their hold in the Dhansiri

1. E.H.K. P. 250.

region against the regular and deliberate inroads of the ~~Shen~~ invaders. Barua's next contention, that Gauhati was at that time easily accessible to the pillage and plunder of the Muslims through Sonargaon, is also unreasonable. At that time the whole of east Bengal was under the sovereignty of the independent Hindu rulers, Madhar Sen and Su Sen,¹ or Kesar Sen and Visvarup Sen,² the successors of Lakshman Sen, who were ruling over the region roughly covering the present districts of Dacca and Mymensingh, from their capital at Vikrampur. We have already shown that the invasion of Kamrup by Yuzbeg was not undertaken through the southern region of the Brahmaputra.³ At the end of this century, one Rai Danuj became very powerful at this corner of Bengal, ~~who~~ ^{and} helped Sultan Ghiyas Uddin Balban, in his campaign against Sultan Mughiz Uddin Tughril in 1281. It is only after this event that Sonargaon emerges as a well-defined division of Bengal under the House of Balban.⁴

Sandhya was one of the very powerful early medieval rulers of Kamrup. In his time the country was possessed of immense material prosperity and moral unity. In his reign a new class of powerful nobilities the names of the "Bhuyans" rose in the country, and proved an effective barrier to the progress of Muslim power in the old "kingdom of Kamarupa". Sandhya is said to have given one of his daughters in marriage to the powerful contemporary Chutia king of Sadiya named Ratnadhvaj. This Chutia rulers are said to have been very friendly with the last Sena rulers of eastern and southern Bengal.⁵ At that

-
1. T.N. p. 558
 2. H.B. Vol. I. p. 227.
 3. See pp. 133-34.
 4. H.B. Vol. II, p. 65.
 5. See p. 226.

time the Sena rulers were also designated "Gaudesvara". So it appears that all the Hindu powers from the remote corner of the North Eastern India to Bengal in the west, united in friendly, cultural and political relations to stop further progress of ~~the~~ Islam in that portion of the Indian sub-continent. Sindhu Rai (1260-85).

Sandhya was succeeded by his son Sindhu Rai in 1260. One of the early events of his reign appears to have been an invasion of Kamata by Sukapha the great. Nothing more is mentioned in the Buranji except the fact that the Kamatesvar acknowledged the supremacy of the Ahom king.² So it seems probable that the eastern part of Kamata was invaded by the victorious soldiers of Sukapha, when Sindhu Rai was pre-eminently occupied with the heavy task of guarding the western frontier of Kamata against the Muslims from his new capital at Kamatapur. At such a critical moment in the history of Kamata, Sindhu prudently did not want to continue in antagonism with a ruler who, after conquering so many local principalities, ^{had} established a kingdom at the eastern extremity of his own. He made friends with the Ahom king on condition of tribute.

It is mentioned in the Guru Charitra that Sindhu Rai assumed the title "Rajrajesvar" i.e. paramount over all the kings. This indicates that the tribute paid to the Ahoms was only temporary. Sukapha died in 1268, when his son Suteupha succeeded him. During the rule of the latter, the Ahom power was at a stand-still. So, in the seventies of the Thirteenth century, Sindhu

1. H.B. Vo. I. p. 227.

2. A.H.B. p. 38.

may have stopped the payment of tribute to the Ahoms and assumed independence by declaring himself paramount. He ruled up to the year 1285.

The Riyaz-us-salatin records that Tughril Khan, alias Sultan Mughizuddin, the viceroy of Laldhnawati, in 1279, sent an expedition to the kingdom of Kamrup.¹ No other indigenous or Persian contemporary or later, mentions this event at all. The Riyaz-us-salatin is a comparatively modern compilation, having been written in 1787-88, ~~after~~ ^{after} more than five hundred years of this event, and cannot therefore be believed as true. Under the circumstances, we cannot incorporate its statement into our present study. Salim, its author, may have confused the Bengal Governor Malik Iktiyar uddin Yuzbeg-i-Tughril Khan, who was defeated in 1255 at the hands of the Kamrup king Sandhya, with Sultan Mughiz uddin Tughril Khan, the viceroy of Laldhnawati in 1279. Our presumption becomes stronger when the fact that Salim gives no account of the disastrous defeat of Yuzbeg at the hands of Sandhya, which is so circumstantially narrated by Minhaj, is noticed. Banerjee² and Vasu³ unfortunately, could not escape the mistake of Salim.

Rup Narayan (1285-1300)

Sindhu Rai was succeeded by his son Rup Narayan in 1285. It is said that the fame of this king reached far and wide to foreign countries. Nothing more is known of him. He is said to have ruled up to the year 1300.⁴

Singhadhvaj (1300-1305)

At the death of Rup Narayan in 1300, his son Singhadhvaj became the

-
1. A.H.B. p. 38.
 2. Banerjee R.D., Banglar Itihas, p. 66, V. 11.
 3. S.H.K. V.1. p. 247.
 4. E.H.K. p. 254.

Kamata king. This king did not enjoy a long reign. He had a minister named Manik, a Kayasth by caste. His father's name was Laharia. In 1305, Manik killed Singhadhvaj and declared himself the king of Kamata by assuming the title "Pratapadhvaj."¹

Pratapadhvaj (1305-1325)

Pratapadhvaj brought an end of the line of kings, who are said to be the descendants of Vaidyadeva or Vallabhadeva. He seems to have come from a family of the feudatory chief of the then Kamata. By virtue of his official jurisdiction, he may have exercised considerable authority in the kingdom. At the murder of his master he became the virtual head of the state. ~~But~~ He could check^{ed} the state of confusion and disorder, which are the natural outcome of such unnatural events as the assassination of a ruling king.² At that time the contemporary Ahom king was Sukhangpha. He was one of the most ambitious Ahom rulers among the immediate successors of Sukapha. After the death of the latter, the then Kamatesvar stopped the payment of tributes and assumed independence. But this disorderly state of affairs in the kingdom of Kamata gave Sukhangpha an opportunity to expand his kingdom towards the west at the cost of the former. He sent an expedition to invade Kamata. The battle between the two countries continued for some years. A great number of casualties occurred on both sides. At last a treaty was concluded in which Pratapadhvaj gave his daughter Rajani in marriage to Sukhangpha.³

1. E.H.K p. 254.

2. See p. 130.

3. Barua H.K., A.B., p. 15.

Early in the twentieth century three coins dated A.H. 721 (A.D. 1321-22), were found at Enayethpur, (fifteen miles south-east of the present Mymensingh town), and at Rupaibari, in the present Nowgong district of Assam.¹ These attracted the attention of many scholars, who supposed that Sultan Ghias uddin Bahadur Shah, the then Governor of Bengal, invaded the kingdom of Kamata and penetrated up to the Nowgong district of present Assam. But no sources mention it. Bhattacharyya contends that "it was about the year 1321-22 A.D. (721-22 A.H.) that the Bengal Sultan Ghiyas uddin Bahadur Shah found himself strong enough to leave Sunargaon and move up the Brahmaputra and thus covered the northern part of the modern Mymensingh district - subjugated the south-eastern part of the Kamrupa kingdom, comprising the region round Enayetpur and Ghiaspur, and then followed up his victory by an attack upon the interior (the modern Koch Bihar), whence he resumed touch with the river and advanced up to Nowgong."² He is neither correct as to the course of the expedition nor is he reliable as to the history of Bahadur Shah's reign. If an expedition was planned to raid somewhere in the Nowgong district there was no necessity to alter the direction towards the interior of Kochbehar, and vice versa, when his own possessions in Bengal were contested by his powerful father and half-a-dozen grown-up brothers.³ From A.H. 711-17 (A.D. 1311-17), Bahadur was at Lakhnawati in continuous contest with his rival brothers, Jalaluddin and Shihabuddin Bughdah Shah and others. On being ousted from North Bengal, he retired to Sonargaon in East Bengal. While

-
1. Supplement to the Catalogue of the Provincial ~~COIN~~ Cabinet, Shillong, pp. 110-11., M.N.E.F.P. p. 60.
 2. M.N.E.F.P. pp. 59-60.
 3. ~~B.H.B.~~, V.11. p. 80

keeping his father out of his new headquarters, the Sultan, who had no legal right to the throne, had a very chequered career till the death of the former in A.H. 722 (A.D. 1322). Next a bloody fratricidal war engaged Bahadur for a time until he had murdered all his brothers except one, Nasiruddin Ibrahim, who escaped into hiding. As soon as the Sultan had safeguarded his position on the throne, he scented the danger of an expedition against Bengal by Sultan Ghiyasuddin Tughluq Shah, which actually took place in A.H. 724 (Jan., 1324). Soon after, Nasiruddin Ibrahim made himself master of Lakhnawati and joined the imperialists in Tirhut against his rival brother Bahadur Shah, who retired at last to East Bengal. We require no more to serve our purpose. The subsequent history of Bahadur Shah is known to all.¹ In A.H. 721-22 (A.D. 1322), it was impossible for Bahadur to send an expedition to such a long distance to the Nowgong district in central Assam. We cannot agree with Barua, who also ascribes ^{such} ~~but~~ a marauding raid to the unlucky Sultan Bahadur Shah.²

Pratapadhwaj maintained good relations with the Ahom king Sukhangpha up to the end of his rule. He had a son by his queen ~~Prabhavati~~, named Durlabh Narayan. He died in 1325.³

Dharma Narayan (1325-30)

It is stated in the Katha Charitra that there was a king over the region bordering the river Mahananda in North Bengal named Dharma Narayan.

11 Banerjee R.D., Banglar Itihas, V. 11. p. 88-95. H.B. Vol. II, p. 80-84.

2. E.H.K. p. 233.

3. See p. 130.

He is said to have had long and continuous warfare with Durlabh Narayan, the son and successor of Pratapadhwaj.¹ Vasu, following Batu Bhatta's 'Devavamsa', contends that this Dharma Narayan was no other than a king of the Deva dynasty of Bengal. He further says that king Dharma Narayan or Dharma Pal was the son of Hari Deva who settled at Pandu Nagara (modern Pandua), being driven away by the Mussalmans from Kantakadvipa, where his father Danujarideva had his capital.² The history of this Danujarideva or Danujarai or Danujamardanadeva has been a bone of contention to the various students of the history of medieval Bengal. The scientific study of the history of medieval Hindu chiefs and rulers of Bengal is a desideratum long overdue. Vasu doesnot seem to be correct in his conjecture. It is unreasonable to think that Dharma was connected with Rai Daring who ruled in Sonargaon in 1281. We know his history but we do not get Dharma's name there. We are inclined to think that Dharma was a relation of Sandhyas successors, and usurped the throne of Kamata in 1325, on the death of Pratapadhwaj, and assumed the title 'Kamatesvar'.

It is mentioned in the Guru Charitra that all the Bhuyans were subordinated to Dharma Narayan. This indicates that he fought with the local insubordinate petty chiefs who might have raised their heads during the reign of the usurper Pratapadhwaj. Dharma Narayan, after establishing complete peace and order in the country, turned his attention to fortifying his western frontiers against the future inroads of the followers of Islam.

1. Gunabhiram, A.B. p. 48.

2. S.H.K. V. ii. p.2.

He built a new city near Dimla in the Rangpur district, the remains of which in the beginning of the nineteenth century are described as ~~the~~ following^s by Buchanan. "About two miles from a bend in the Tista, a little below Dimla, in the Rangpur district, are the remains of a fortified city, said to have been built by Raja Dharmapala, the first king of the Pal dynasty in Kamarupa."¹ Buchanan is confused between two kings of the same name beginning with "Dharma". He is wrong to ascribe the Dimla erections to the Kamrupa king Dharmapala of the Pala dynasty, who was not the first king but the sixth if not the seventh. The founder of the city near Dimla had no relationship with the Pala kings of Kamarupa.²

Next Dharma Narayan removed his seat of government to the newly constructed city, the fact having been referred^{to} as due to the curse of the goddess Kamakhya in the Guru Charitra. Now Dharma Narayan assumed a new title "Gaudesvara" perhaps as a result of the annexation of certain territory from the kingdom of Gauda. In the meantime there occurred anarchy and confusion in the eastern part of his kingdom. A number of the Bhuyans under the leadership of Durlabh Narayan, the son of Pratapadhvaj, became supreme in every village and challenged the authority of Dharma Narayan. This led to incessant hostilities between Durlabh Narayan and Dharma Narayan ~~and~~^{until} after a considerable number of ~~the~~ casualties on both sides, peace was concluded. According to the conditions of the treaty, the whole kingdom was divided into two, the northern and the eastern part with Kamatapur going to Durlabh Narayan and Dharma Narayan retaining the territories to the south including Rangpur

1. A. S. B. 1878, p. 136. E. H. K. p. 248.
 1. Martin, E. I. p.
 2. E. H. K. p. 145.

and Hymenshingh. It is said that after the meeting in which the treaty was concluded Dharma Narayan proceeded to Ghoraghat in the Rangpur district where his son Tamradhvaj received him. It appears that after this division of territories Durlabh Narayan became the "Kamatesvara" and Dharma Narayan styled himself only as "Gaudesvara".¹

This compromise between the two Hindu rulers had other reasons also. At that time the Tughluq Emperors of Delhi were very interested in controlling the disorderly state of affairs in Bengal. In 1328, the Emperor Muhammad Tughluq sent his all-powerful general Bahram Khan against the Bengal Sultan Bahadur Shah, who in the meantime had shaken off the imperial authority. In the battle Bahadur Shah was defeated and killed. Next the Delhi Emperor planned an invasion of the kingdom of Kamata.² This invasion took place in 1333, but was defeated and crushed at the outskirts of Kamata by Durlabh Narayan, Dharma Narayan's successor.³

Taking advantage of the chaos and disorder during the warfare in the country, a Bhuyan named Purusottamadasa assumed independence in central Kamrup (Kamrup district). In 1329, he issued a land-grant donating a village called Raut Kuchi, not far from the present Nalbari, to a Brahman named Dharmakara. It is said in the grant that Vasudeva, grandfather of Purusottamadasa, was the right hand of the king of Kamrupa and that he always marched at the head of a thousand swordsmen ^{at} the side of the king. He may have been the contemporary of the king Sandhya or his successor Sindhu Rai. Jayadevadasa, the father of the assignee, is said to have been the lotus of

-
1. E.H.K. p. 247-8, based on Ramcharan Thakur's Guru Charitra of which a copy is not available.
 2. H.B. V. ii, p. 89.
 3. Alamgirnama p. 731, M.N.E.F.P. p. 61.

his own race and possessed the characteristic qualities of the aryan. This indicates that he was a high class Hindu. Purusottama is said to have obtained the glory of sovereignty by dint of his valour and heroism. This shows that he had to fight for his supremacy against neighbouring chiefs.¹

Dharma Narayan's reign in the eastern part of Kamata ended in 1330, but he may have ruled up to a later period in the Bengal districts of Rangpur, Dinajpur and Jalpaiguri. The sage Kendu Kulai is said to have lived in his reign. Dharma was succeeded by his son Tamaradvaj, who established himself at Ghoraghat in the Rangpur district. Gait states, on the basis of some unspecified sources which are not available to us, that Dharma Narayan was succeeded in turn by Padma Narayan, Chandra Narayan and others, ending with Ram Chandra,² but we cannot identify any of them with any rulers of medieval Kamata.

Durlabh Narayan (1330-50)

At the death of Durlabh Narayan's father, Pratapadvaj, in 1325, Dharma Narayan usurped the throne of Kamata. It is mentioned in the Guru Charitra that, after some time, Durlabh with the help of the local chiefs, seized a part of Dharma Narayan's territory and established his headquarters at a place called Garia, nine hours' journey from the modern city of Koch Behar. This led to his rivalry with Dharma Narayan and a war continued for a certain period between them. At last a treaty was concluded in which he became the master of the whole of the eastern part of the kingdom of Kamata.³ Gunabhiran

-
1. S.H.K. V. 1. p. 247.
 2. H.A. p. 17.
 3. E.H.K. p. 248.

informs us that at this time¹ seven families of Brahmans and seven families of the Kayasthas were sent by the Gaudesvara to Kamata. Among them the Kayasthas, Chandibar was the most cultured and learned, and hence he was made the leader of all. It is said that the descendants of the main twelve families of these immigrants were known in later times as "Twelve Bhuyans" in Assam. The great Vaishnava reformer Sankar Dev was the great-great-grandson of Chandibar, who was called the "Siromani Bh^uyan" (or the leader), on account of his special qualities.²

It is mentioned in the Deodhai Asam Buranji that, in 1332, Sukhrangpha ascended the throne of the Ahom kingdom. He appointed his step-brother Chao Pulai, the son of Rajani, the Kamata princess, the "Saring Raja" (heir-apparent). Chao Pulai conspired with Bargohain Taphrikhin against Sukhrangpha to dethrone him. But, the plot having been detected, both the conspirators fled to the Kamata king, who was the relative of Chao Pulai.³ Barua says that this Kamata king was no other than Durlabh Narayan.⁴ He is correct, because this is confirmed from the Muhammadan chronicles. In 1332, Durlabh Narayan advanced with a large army for the cause of Chao Pulai, who was his nephew. The Kamata army first advanced to Athgaon, and then cautiously moved to Saring and constructed a fort there. But in the meantime

-
1. The seven Brahman Families: Krishna Pandit, Rambar, Lohar, Bayan, Dharam, Mathura and Raghupati.
The seven Kayastha Families: Hari, Srihari, Sripati, Sridhar, Chidananda, Sadananda and Chandibar.
 2. Gunabhiram, A.H. p. 43.
 3. D.A.B. p. 9.
 4. E.H.K. p. 251.

Durlabh got information that the Delhi Emperor Muhammad Bin Tughluq had sent an expedition consisting of 100,000 cavalry to invade Kamata. The imperial army entered the frontier of Kamata through Mymensingh, which at that time formed the border of Durlabh's kingdom. Immediately Durlabh returned to the capital and despatched a large army to resist the imperialists. It is said in the Alamgirnamah that the grand army of the Emperor was entirely defeated and perished ~~into~~^{at} the hands of the Assamese warriors.¹ The above fact is further confirmed by a number of coins of Md. Bin Tughluq dated 1332-33, which were found by Stapleton in the vicinity of Enayetpur in Mymensingh, in 1910.² This leads to the conclusion that the first invasion of Mohammad Bin Tughluq was attempted through Mymensingh, which was the frontier of Durlabh's kingdom in that direction. It is further mentioned in the Alamgirnamah that to avenge the defeat mentioned above, Mohammad Bin Tughluq sent another expedition of a similar size, to invade the kingdom of Kamata. This time the expedition may have been despatched through North Bengal. It is said that "when it arrived in Bengal, it was panic-stricken and shrank from the enterprise."³ It may well mean that the army was defeated by the Kamata troops before penetrating the country.

Durlabh Narayan was one of the most energetic and influential kings of Kamata. He had an earnest desire for culture and learning. His royal court was adorned with many eminent scholars and poets such as Hema Sarasvati,

-
1. Alamgirnamah, p. 731, M.N.E.F.P. p. 61.
 2. J.A.S.B. 1922, p. 425.
 3. Alamgirnamah, p. 731., M.N.E.F.P. p. 61.

Kaviratna Sarasvati, and Haribar Bipra. The poems of the three latter survive, and are among the glories of early Assamese literature. He was probably the only king of Kamata who was acknowledged as the sovereign over all the Bhuyans of the eastern part of the kingdom. During the rule of Dulabh, the mountain tribes of Bhutan made occasional raids in the north-eastern part of Kamrupa, but how the king drove them all away from his kingdom with the help of Chandibar is elaborately described in the Guru Charitra. He maintained good relations with the Ahom king up to the end of his reign. He ruled up to 1350.

Indra Narayan (1350-65)

Dulabh Narayan was succeeded by his son Indra Narayan in 1350. It is mentioned in the "Jayadratha Vadha" that, through the blessing of Siva, Indra Narayan would be the "Pancha Gaudesvara".¹ Perhaps this refers to the fact that this king wrested the western half of Kamata territory from the control of Dharma Narayan's successor.

Banerjee² and Bhattacharyya³ contend that Sikandar Shah, the Bengal Sultan, invaded Kamata in 1357. The authority for this statement is a silver coin bearing the name of Sikandar Shah minted at "Chawalistan wib (alias) Kamru" and dated 759 A.H. (A.D. 1357-58).⁴ This invasion is not mentioned by any of the sources, either Muslim or local. Following Stapleton's surmise

-
1. E.H.K. p. 250. *The source is unavailable, and is apparently unpublished.*
 2. Banerjee R.D., Banglar Itihas, Vol. II, p. 149.
 3. M.N.E.F.P. p. 63.
 4. Catalogue of Coins in Indian Museum, Vol. II, p. 152.

that Sikandar's activities were confined to the north of Mymensing¹, east of the Brahmaputra, which constituted a part of Kamarupa, and that the coin was minted in that part of the above district, Barua says that the conquest of Kamrup by Sikandar as recorded in the coin of 752 A.H. is an empty boast.¹ This seems a correct judgment, and we believe that the alleged invasion never took place for the following reasons:

Bhattacharyya's theory that Sikandar advanced as far as the Bar Nadi is unreasonable. His statement² that: "Sikandar succeeded to the throne about the year 1356 (A.H. 758) and a year after, launched an attack on Kamrupa. The time was very opportune. The reigning Kamrupa king was involved in a quarrel with the Ahom monarch Sukhrangpha, and could not offer serious opposition to the foreign invader."² ^{this} is not true. Sikandar succeeded to the throne not in 1356 (A.H. 758) but in 1357 (A.H. 759), at the death of his father Sultan Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah.³ Bhattacharyya's contention that Kamata king at that time was otherwise engaged and could not offer resistance to Sikandar is incorrect, because we have already shown that Chao Pulai's plot against his half-brother Sukhrangpha took place in 1332, just after the latter's succession, when there was indeed a Muslim invasion, but sent by Mohammad Bin Tughluq.⁴ We have no alternative but to dismiss Bhattacharyya's arguments as baseless, since he argues in favour of a large scale invasion, otherwise unrecorded, on the strength of a single

1. E.H.K. p. 234-5.

2. M.N.E.F.P., p.63.

3. Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi, N.B. II, pp. 110-11.

4. See pp. 150-51.

ambiguous coin. Equally untenable is the contention of Banerjee. He did not take into consideration the fact that, in 1357, Sikandar cannot have invaded Kamata, as that year proved a very tragic one for him. In that year he lost his father, and immediately after ascending the throne he had to fight against the Sultan of Delhi.¹

Realising the weaknesses of the above arguments, Sarkar cleverly says that the conquest and the occupation of the city had taken place previous to this year, presumably in Ilyas Shah's reign, for Sikandar immediately on his accession had to fight against the Sultan of Delhi.² But this scholar also seems prejudiced. From an unbiased study of the history of Bengal at this period, we get the impression that at that time it was impossible for the Bengal Sultan even to think of the invasion of such a distant country, not to speak of its actual undertaking. In A.H. 755 (or A.D. 1355) Sultan Feroz Shah left Bengal after his one year's siege of the capital.³ The year 1356 proved most fateful to the Bengal Sultan. During the whole year his only recorded activity was to send valuable presents to the court of Delhi for the satisfaction of the imperialists. Moreover, Feroz's greed for the elephants of Bengal cost the Sultan of Lakhnawati dear. In these circumstances it was hardly possible for Sikandar to undertake an expedition to Kamata in which the journey involved was most strenuous and hard for the people of the plains. Nothing is known of the later events of Indra Narayan's reign. It seems that

1. H.B. Vol. II, pp. 110-11.

2. Ibid. p. 110.

3. Barni, Tarikh-i-Feroz Shahi, Banerjee R.D., Banglar Itihas, Vol. II, p. 136

at the end of his rule, some unruly elements raised their heads into the kingdom, as a result of which the ruling king Indra Narayan had to part with his royal throne and insignia.

After the middle of the fourteenth century the history of Kamata is most uncertain. We have seen that Durlabh Narayan was succeeded by his son Indra Narayan but we do not know who was the successor the latter. It is mentioned in the Ahom Buranji that the Kamata king again came into conflict with the Ahom king Sudangpha, who ruled at the close of the fourteenth century. It is stated that one Tao Sulai, who was the paramour of Sudangpha's queen, took shelter with the Kamata king, who refused to surrender the fugitive on the demand of the Ahom king.¹ This king of Kamata must have been a successor of Indra Narayan and have ruled at the end of the fourteenth or the very beginning of the fifteenth century, because Sudangpha's rule ended in 1407.

It is mentioned in the Assam Buranji that a new line of kings founded by Sasanka or Arimath² and followed successively by Gajanka, Sukranka and M³iganka, ruled from 1238 to 1478.² The Kamrupar Buranji also mentions the names of those kings in the same order.³ A grant published by Jenkins and a chronicle shown to him by a Brahman, also record these names.⁴ Gunabhiram mentions the names of the founder Sasanka alias Arimatha, 1365-1385, and ^{of} one of his sons, who died a premature death fighting with the Kacharis.⁵ After

-
1. A.H.B., p. 50.
 2. Haliram, A.B., p. 12.
 3. Ibid.
 4. J.A.S.B. 1840, pp. 766-67.
 5. Gunabhiram, A.B., pp. 40-41.

Indra Narayan, the regular line ended and an era of upstarts and adventurers followed. Indra Narayan himself may have been killed by such an adventurer. The various chronicles confirm that this usurper was no other than a king named Sasanka or Arimatta. He is said to have become king of Kamata after a long career of struggles and military engagements.

There are numerous conflicting legends concerning him. It appears from the legends that he was a powerful king. The genealogy of the Rajas of Dimarua states that one Somapala of Pratapapura married Harmati, who, being united with the Brahmaputra, gave birth to Arimatta. In one of his exploits he is said to have killed his father and, in order to atone for his sin, he went to the Brahma Kunda with the dead body; this had to be cremated, owing to decomposition, on the way, somewhere near Sadiya, and Arimatta reached the Kunda with only his father's ashes. The people of Pratapapura, along with another son of Somapala, went to Dimarua and settled there.¹ It is stated in the Haragauri Vilasa that Bhagadatta was followed by Dharmapala and Chandrapala. The latter's son Arimatta had three daughters Dharmavati, Avanti and Jayanti. From the above it seems that there were more than one Bhagadatta in the history of Kamrup and Kamata.²

It is mentioned in the Prasiddha Narayan's Vamsavalika~~that~~ that one Ram Chandra was the fourteenth in descent from Jitari. Hamay identifies Jitari with Dharmapala and holds that his kingdom was in central Assam and the dynasty became extinct with Sukranka.³ It is further told in the Vamsavali

-
1. R.P.H.R.A., p. 19.
 2. H.C.P.A., p. 192.
 3. J.A.S.B., 1848, p. 464.

that one Arimatta was born of the princess of the house of Ram Chandra. It is stated there that he ruled at Vaidyargouh until 1238. ^uGeenabhiram holds that he was of Nagakhya line and further refers to the tradition which ascribes the foundation of Vaidyargarh at Betua in Kamrup to one Phengna.¹

The account given in the Bhuyar Puthi states that Ratuapura in the Majuti was founded by one Ranga and one of his descendants, Anga was killed while fighting in the Mahabharata war. Yudhisthira and his descendants are said to have ruled in Kamrup down to Pratap, who was succeeded by his son Mayamatta in Ratuapura, who had two sons Arimatta and Nagamatta and a daughter. Mayamatta's kingdom was divided between his two sons, and in the western part Arimatta's minister, Samudra built the city of Visvanatha. Mayamatta was killed by Arimatta while he was hunting. Arimatta then placed his minister in charge of the kingdom with Manohara, the son of the minister, at Visvanatha, and after his pilgrimage Arimatta drowned himself in the Dikhan river. The minister and his son ruled for some time in Visvanatha. The latter's daughter Lakshmi, had two sons Santanu and Samanta; both of these had twelve sons, each reigning for some time.² According to another tradition Mayuradhvaj of the race of Siva ruled the territory between Visvanatha and Subansiri and had his capital at Ratnavatipura. His son Tamradhvaj followed him, and was succeeded by Pratappuriya, who married Harmati, daughter of Haravinda, a descendant of Trabhatta of Samara; as a result of her union with the Brahma-putra, Arimatta was born at Visvanatha;

1. H.C.P.A. p. 194.

2. R.P.H.R.A., pp. 20-21.

he extended his kingdom to Bhutan and Nepal, until at last he killed his father and committed suicide.¹ By another tradition collected by Wade, Arimatta is said to have defeated and killed the Kamata king, Durlabhendra, and himself became the Kamatasvar. Then he killed Phengua Konwar (prince), a nephew of Durlabhendra, and overthrew Ram Chandra, a local chief, who ruled somewhere in the modern district of Darrang.² The account given in the Assam Buranji states that Arimatta was defeated and killed by one Phengua, who was a relation of the Kamata king. It is said that, after killing Arimatta, Phengua built a new capital with embankments in the Dhamdhama ~~mau~~ ^{mau} ~~sonza~~ of Kamrup, and named it Phenguagarh.³ According to Kamrupar Buranji, Arimatta was a son of the Brahmaputra by a Sudra damsel in the kingdom of Ram Chandra. Arimatta first defeated and killed Durlabhendra and became the king of Behar. Thence he came to Kamrup and after killing its king Ram Chandra founded his capital at Vaidyargarh. Then he shifted his capital to Pratappur north of Visvanath and from this he ruled the whole of Kamrup. A nephew of Durlabhendra, Phengua by name, settled himself in a house near the palace and intrigued with one of the queens of Arimatta through the help of a florist. The chiefs and hobles of the country strongly protested against his cruelty, when Arimatta committed suicide in disgust and remorse.⁴ It is stated in the Kashir ^m chronicles that king Jayapida, grandson of Muktapida Lalitaditya, who overthrew Yaso^{uj}varman of Kanah^{uj} in the eighth century, came

-
1. R.P.H.R.A., p. 21.
 2. Wade J.P., Account of Assam, p. 180.
 3. Haliram, A.B., pp. 11-12.
 4. S.H.K., V. I, pp. 229-31.

as far as Pundravardhana and led an expedition against a neighbouring king of Nepal named Arimudi or Arimuri.¹ A writer in the Calcutta review identified this Arimuri with Arimatta and thus placed him towards the close of the eighth century.² Vasu seems to have identified Arimatta with Rajarideva who ruled at the end of the twelfth century.³ Choudhury suggests that the extensive conquests made by Arimatta in Assam and Bengal and the establishment of his capital at Visvanatha and Ratnapur in Upper Assam, along with the creation of a fortification called Vaidyargarh, lead us to believe that he was the same as Vaidyadeva, who established himself in Assam after dethroning Tingyadeva in 1138.⁴ The contention of Choudhury deserves no doubt very high appreciation. Vasu's conjecture on the identification of Arimatta with Rajarideva on the grounds of a certain similarity in the names of the two ~~names~~^{Kings} does not stand logical study. Arimatta is a title having no relation with the previous name. The views of Choudhury that the story of the birth of Arimatta as a result of his mother Harmati's union with the Brahmaputra, is obviously absurd, and that ^{this implies that} Ram Chandra was not at all the father of Arimatta are equally true.⁵ But there are still many difficulties in the tradition. It seems to us that there ~~were~~^{was} more than one Arimatta in the history of ^aKanur^a and Kamata. The Arimatta in question here is altogether different from that of Choudhury and Vasu. We are inclined to think of

-
1. M.A. Stein, Kalhana's Chronicles of the Kings of Kashmir, I, Westminster 1910, pp. 170-71
 2. C.R. 1867.
 3. S.H.K., Vol. I. pp. 229-31.
 4. H.C.P.A. p. 203.
 5. Ibid. p. 202.

Arimatta as a local Bhuyan. He killed Indra Narayan, the last ruler of the Pratap's line, and founded a new line in the second half of the fourteenth century, and his three successors Gajanka, Sukranka and Mriganka ruled up to the middle of the fifteenth century. Though the fortifications at Vaidyargarh were no doubt founded in 1138 by Vaidyadeva, who, as Choudhuri contended, was also known as Arimatta, we believe it was Arimatta alias Sasanka, who dethroned Indra Narayan, and made proper additions and repairs to the fortifications. We can agree with Choudhuri when he says that the tradition that Phengua killed Arimatta through the help of the latter's wife is of doubtful historicity. But we shall not accept his contention that Phengua was an invader from Bengal, probably of the Sena family, i.e. of Vijayasena or Lakshmanasena, until the genealogy of the Sena rulers is traced up to the middle of the fourteenth century. Phengua, we believe, had nothing to do with Arimatta alias Vaidyadeva. We have strong ground to believe that Phengua was a relation of the Kamata king, who was killed and dethroned by Arimatta. He was no doubt a powerful contestor of Arimatta, for all the chronicles are unanimous as to the erection of Phenguagarh by Phengua in Dhamdhama mauza in Kamrup. He might have been killed by Arimatta himself. Choudhuri seems to be correct when he contends that the three rulers mentioned after Arimatta: Gajanka, Sukranka and Mriganka, must either have been the descendants of Vaidyadeva or have been related to Vallabhadeva.¹ Because we have already shown that, with the rule of Pratapadhwaj, a different line from that of Vaidyadeva or Vallabha deva took power. Arimatta is said

1. H.C.P.A., p. 203.

to have usurped the throne on the death of Indra Narayan, the last ruler of that line.

In the Sahari Mouza in Nowgong there are some remains of an old fort with high embankments known as the Jangalgarh. This is alleged to have been the capital of Jongal Vataku, another son of Arimatta, who is said to have fought with and to have been defeated by the Kacharis and later to have drowned himself in the Kallang river.¹ Choudhury suggests that Jangal Valaku, Ratna Simha and Gajanka are the various names of the same person.² The Rajas of Dimarua claim their descent from Arimatta. Arimatta is said to have subdued the local chiefs in eastern Kamrup, who had previously thrown off the yoke of the Kamata hegemony. The tradition current throughout Assam that Arimatta killed his father can be explained by the supposition that he killed Indra Narayan, the last ruler of Pratapadivaj's line.

Gajanka (1385-1400)

Arimatta was succeeded by his son Gajanka. Nothing is known as to the events of his reign. Barua contends that Arimatta was succeeded by Sukaranka or Sukranka.³ But he is not correct. We shall show later that Sukranka was the second successor of Arimatta. In the land grant published by Jenkins, the names Minangka (or Arimatta), Gujanka, Sukanangka, Minangka are given in this order.⁴ Haliram also refers to them in the above order.⁵ Moreover Barua's statement that the Ahom king Sudangpha despatched an

-
1. Geenabhiram, A.B., p. 41-42.
 2. H.C.P.A., p. 197.
 3. E.H.K., p. 257.
 4. J.A.S.B., 1840, p. 767.
 5. Haliram, A.B., p. 12.

expedition against the son and successor ^{of} Arinatta does not seem reasonable. It is mentioned in the Buranji that Sudangpha came to the throne in the year 1397. Immediately after his accession, he had to fight hard against the Tipamiyas and at the conclusion of the struggle he married a daughter of one of their chiefs named Khuntai. The girl, while in her father's house, became enamoured of a Tipamiya named Tao Subai. The latter, with a view to challenge Sudangpha, went to Surumpha, the Nara king, and asked for his help. An engagement took place, in which Sudangpha was successful. Next ~~Tao~~ Sulai took shelter with the contemporary Kamata king, who supported his cause, and attacked the Ahom king. In our opinion all these events could not have taken place within a period of about three years, (i.e. 1397-c.1400). So we prefer to suggest that the invasion of the Ahom kingdom by the Kamata king took place in the very beginning of the fifteenth century, when Sukranka, the son and successor of Gajanka, was ruling; in this Barua agrees with us.

Sukranka (c.1400-1415)

Gajanka was succeeded by his son Sukaranka or Sukranka in 1400. We have seen that it is mentioned in the Buranji that Tao Sulai, a Tipam chief, being unable to overpower Sudangpha, the Ahom king, went to the Kamata king and caused him to attack the kingdom of the Ahoms.¹ It is said that at that time the Kamata king was Sekhang, which is apparently the Ahom pronunciation of Sukranka. In the meantime the contemporary Bengal Sultan Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah, taking advantage of this rivalry of the Kamata king with the Ahoms, attacked the kingdom of Kamata, when Sukranka was compelled to make peace

1. D.A.B., p.11.

with Sudangpha, giving his daughter Bhajni in marriage and asking military aid to fight the invaders. The combined Kamata and Ahom troops defeated the Mussalmans and forced them to retreat beyond the river Karactoya.¹ The Deodhai Buranji explicitly records the dowry given at the marriage of the daughter of Sukranka, the gifts being two elephants, and a number of horses, as well as a quantity of gold and silver.²

Mriganka (c. 1415-1440)

Sukranka was succeeded by his son Mriganka in c. 1415. It is mentioned in the Buranji that Mriganka established his sway over the territory from the ^{Kara} ~~Lay~~toyoya in the west to Sadiya in the east. This seems to be obviously a reference to his victory over some neighbouring petty Bhuyans and chiefs and the annexations of their principalities to the kingdom of Kamata. He died childless, when the line of Arimatta came to the end.

It is mentioned in the Assam Buranji that after the death of Mriganka, the last ruler of the line of Arimatta, there ensued in Kamata a regime of confusion and disorder.³ The Kamrupar Buranji states that after the line of Arimatta, a new line of kings consisting of the three rulers, Niladhvaj, Chakradhraj and Nihambar ruled the kingdom of Kamata.⁴ Therefore, it appears that about the middle of the fifteenth century, after the extinction of the line of Arimatta, the ruling house of Kamata was supplanted by a dynasty Khan or Khyan by name, the founder of which was one Niladhvaj.

-
1. H.B. II, p. 118.
 2. D.A.B., p. 12.
 3. Haliram, A.B. pp. 12-13.
 4. ~~Haliram~~ K.R.B. p. 99.

Niladhvaj (c.1440-1460)

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, Buchanan collected some legends of this king. It is said that there was a Brahman, who had a servant to look after his cattle. Many complaints were lodged by the neighbours against that cowherd for carelessness in his duty. One day he was found asleep in the field by his master, while his cattle were destroying the crops of the neighbours. Intending to chastise the servant, when the Brahman approached the sleeping man, he marked the signs of fortune ~~into~~ his feet. He freed him immediately from his low service and obtained a promise from the cowherd to make him his minister when he became king. After a while there arose in the kingdom of Kamata a number of unruly and subversive elements, and the situation became favourable for an upstart. Accordingly the servant by dint of his strength and valour became supreme over all and assumed the title "Niladhvaj". He fulfilled his promise by appointing the Brahman as his minister.¹ ~~Go~~^{un}abhiram tells the above legend more or less in the same manner, but informs us at last that this is a popular tradition shorn of historical truth.² Vasu goes to the extreme and, on the grounds of the absence of the contemporary historical accounts, he doubts the very existence of this line of kings.³ But he is not correct. It is clearly mentioned in the Kamrupar Buranji that Niladhvaj, Chakradhvaj and Nilambar were the rulers over the Singmari region, up to the bank of the Brahmaputra opposite Hajo, and ruled from the city of Kamatapur. Moreover, this text does not mention the

-
1. Martin, Eastern India, Vo. III, pp. 408-09.
 2. Gunabhiram, A.B., pp. 44-45.
 3. S.H.K. Vol. II, pp. 30-31.

fantastic legend collected by Buchanan.¹ So, it appears that Niladhvaj was originally a petty chief and from an ordinary position he assumed the power and dignity of a king by virtue of hard labour and prudent tact. This line of kings can thus be placed as the rulers of Kamata after the line of Arimatta the last representative of which ruled up to the year c. 1440. Niladhvaj perhaps assumed the title "Kamatesvar", after establishing his authority over the whole of Kamata. He brought many Brahmans, perhaps the relations of his chief minister, from Mithila, and gave all facilities for their permanent settlement in his kingdom. He rebuilt and extended the city of Kamatapur by repairs and new constructions. His rule ended in c. 1460.

Chakradhvaj (c. 1460-1480)

A later Muslim work the Risalat-us-shuhada treats of a certain general Ismail, who led a campaign against the king of Kamata. ^{Sarkar} ~~Sinor~~ has reasonably suggested that Ismail was the general of the Bengal Sultan ^{Ruknuddin Barbak} ~~R. u. d. B.~~ (1459-74).² In that case the invasion occurred in the reign of Chakradhvaj as Barua informs us.³ It is mentioned in the Risalat-us-Shuhada that the scene of operations against the 'Kamatesvar' was the eastern part of the Dinajpur district.⁴ Sarkar suggests in this connection, that the expedition was intended to effect the recovery of the territory to the west of the Karatoya lately overrun by the Kamrup forces.⁵ He appears to be correct, though we have no positive evidence. Kamata seems to have been flourishing at the

-
1. K.R.B., p.99.
 2. H.B. Vol. II. p. 134.
 3. E.H.K., p. 263.
 4. J.A.S.B. 1874, pp. 216-39.
 5. H.B. Vol. II, p. 134.

time, and Bengal was suffering under the Habshi usurpers. Therefore it is quite likely that a certain part of the regions on the west bank of the Karatoya, within the division of Lakshnavati, were annexed to the kingdom of Kamata by either Niladhrāj or his successor Chakradhrāj. Under Chakradhrāj, a great army was sent to contest the Muslims in a place near (Mahi) Santosh, in Dinajpur. The Muslim source admits that Ismail was defeated at the hands of the Kamata army; we are told, however, that he succeeded in turning the tables by his magical powers, and finally captured the king of Kamata, who was converted to Islam. Sarkar, having found the site of the burial of Ismail at Pirgunj, in Rangpur to the east of the Karatoya, conjectures that the Kamata troops were subsequently withdrawn from that area,¹ as a result of Ismail's victory. But he is not correct, for Ismail is said to have died in 1474, and a few years after this Nilambar, the son and successor of Chakradhrāj, constructed some fortifications at Ghoraghat in the Rangpur district.² Buchanan also records a tradition that Nilambar became the king over the Matsya kingdom, which he identified with North Bengal.³ Moreover, Sarkar himself in another place informs us that "the indecisive war fought by Barbak with the ruler of Kamatapur was followed by the loss of considerable territory on the eastern bank of the Karatoya."⁴ Gait does not acknowledge the tradition of Ismail's alleged victory over the king of Kamatapur,⁵ since it is not corroborated by other sources.

1. H.B. Vol. II, p. 134.

2. Geonabhiram, A.B. p. 45.

3. Martih, Eastern India, p. 410. Vol. III,

4. H.B. II, p. 146.

5. H.A., p. 44.

Nilambar (c. 1480-1498)

On the death of Chakradhvaj in 1480, Nilambar ascended the throne of Kamata. This king appears to have been very powerful and his kingdom is said to have extended from the Karatoya to the Barnadi.¹ Gait collects from unnamed sources which are not available to us the statement that Nilambar conquered and annexed to his dominion the north-eastern part of the region which previously belonged to the Muhammadan rulers of Gauda,² which at the time was suffering anarchy at the hands of the Abyssinians or Habshis. We are led to think that Nilambar fully utilised the confusion and disorder of the slave epoch in the kingdom of Gaur for military conquests and territorial annexations during the first decade of his reign. He consolidated his conquests by building a military road from his capital to his frontier fortress of Ghoraghat on the Karatoya. He also did much to improve communications and, amongst other works, this magnificent road deserves special attention, for a portion of it still forms part of the main road between Koch Behar, Rangpur and Bogra.³

Bhattacharyya contended that both Barbak's struggles with the Khan king of Kamata in 1473 and Husain's expedition against Nilambar in 1498 took place in the reign of Nilambar.⁴ But we cannot agree with him. If Nilambar fought with Ismail in 1473, he must have ascended the throne by the sixties of the fifteenth century. If he had been a youth of at least twenty years on

-
1. Martin, Eastern India, p. 410. Vol. III.
 2. H.A. p. 44.
 3. H.B. II, p. 146.
 4. M.N.E.F.P. p. 65.

his accession, Nilambar would have been an old man of about sixty years by the time of Husain's invasion. But the military genius he displayed in fighting the Muslim generals, and his many other activities, do not suggest an elderly man. Moreover a reign of about four decades for a dethroned king appears to be too long. We have suggested that Nilambar's accession occurred about 1480 and Ismail's invasion in the reign of his immediate predecessor.

In 1498, Alauddin Husain, the Sultan of Gaur (1493-1519), led a vigorous campaign with a view to recovering the lost territory and putting a permanent stop to the ~~Khan~~ aggression. This invasion is alleged to have been instigated by Nilambar's Brahman minister, whose licentious son had been brutally murdered by that king.¹ But this popular belief cannot stand in the light of logical study. Husain came to the throne in 1493 after a regime of Abyssinian disorganisation. For the first few years of his reign, he engaged himself on the internal consolidation of the kingdom. Next he wanted to take military actions against the frontier powers who had availed themselves fully ~~of~~ ⁱⁿ the confusion and disorder of the slave rule in Gaur. According to the Riyaz-us-Salatin Husain invaded Kamata or Kaurup after his conquest of Oprissa.² Next he is said to have conquered Tipperah and other frontier territories. A powerful ruler such as Husain could not forgive a non-Muslim whose ambition and enterprise ^{had} ~~costed~~ considerable territorial loss to his own kingdom. So, Husain appears to have invaded Kamata according to a careful plan, and for very good reasons of state. The story of Nilambar's renegade

1. Martin, Eastern India, p. 410-11. Vol III.

2. Abdus Salane, Riyaz-us-Salatin, pp. 132-133. J.A.S.B., 1894, p. 179.

minister inciting Husain to invade Kamata for no other reason than a desire for revenge is quite incredible.

It is stated in the Buranji that the Muslim army was led by one Dulal Gaji, son-in-law and general of Husain.¹ According to the Fathiyah-i-Ibriyah the invading army comprised 24,000 infantry and cavalry and a numerous flotilla.² The city of Kamatapur was strongly fortified and the siege dragged on, according to the tradition collected by Buchanan, for twelve years. The Muslim forces finally gained entrance into the capital by means of treachery. All attempts and efforts of the invading army, having failed, the commander informed Nilambar of his desire of making peace and leaving of the country on the most friendly terms. This having been accepted, it was agreed that the ladies of the Muslim chiefs should pay their respects to the queen of Nilambar. By means of this subterfuge some soldiers were introduced into the city in litters, and with their aid it was captured. Nilambar himself was taken prisoner and carried to Gaur, but he made his escape en route.³ Whatever the truth of this rather improbable tradition, it seems clear that the success of the Muslims had been gained against the Kamata king after a long and hard battle. The city of Kamatapur was eventually destroyed and the adjoining territory up to Hajo was annexed to the kingdom of Gauda. Four local chiefs named Rup Narayan, Ghosal Khan, Mal Kumar and Lakshmi Narayan, who were probably Bhuyans, submitted to Husain's

1. Haliram, A.B. p. 13.

2. Fathiyah-i-Ibriyah, Shahab-Uddin-Jalish, J.A.S.B. 1872, p. 79.

3. Martin, Eastern India, p. 411. Vol. III.

suzerainty.¹ A colony of Afghans was left in Kamata, who dispossessed the Hindu chiefs and took up the civil and military administration under the viceroyalty of Husain's son.² The Buranji mention him as Dulal Gaji or Chaudan Gaji, perhaps a corruption of Prince Daniyal.³ But the victory of the Muslims ^{was} ~~is~~ a transitory ~~was~~ event. As soon as the rainy season commenced, the king came with a big army and surrounded the Muslims and succeeded in killing all of them who had not been ^{made} ~~a~~ prisoners ~~into~~ the hands of the Kamata soldiers.⁴ The Buranjis also state the names of Masandar Gaji, Kalu Dewan and Sultan Ghius-uddin, possibly other generals of Husain. The latter is said to have built a mosque at Hajo and was buried near it. This place is still considered sacred by local Muhammadans, who regard it as "Foa Mecca", or (one fourth of Mecca).⁵ This Muslim regime has left the darkest memories in the traditions of the country. Buranjists refer to it as an era of temple-breaking and propagation of Islam in Assam. The demolition and destruction of the temples at Kedarnath and Umananda are ascribed to the credit of the founder of the "Foa Mecca".⁶ Hussain celebrated his success by the building of a Madrasah at Malda, the inscription of which bears a date corresponding to March, 1502.⁷

-
1. Riyaz-us-Salatin, Abdus Salam, J.A.S.B., 1894, p. 179.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Haliram, A.B. p. 13, K.R.B. p. 100.
 4. Alangirnarah Mohammed Salpi, Translated by H. Vansittart, p. 72.
 5. Haliram, A.B. p. 14.
 6. K.R.B. p. 100.
 7. J.A.S.B., 1874, p. 303.

With the overthrow of Nilambar, the rule of the Kamata kings in Kamrup came to an end. It is very likely that when Kamatap~~ur~~^{ur} was sacked, Nilambar fled. He is heard of no more. After a while the Bhuyan chiefs combined under the leadership of the most powerful against the Muslim hegemony, and, taking advantage of the rainy season, attacked Daniyal's garrison and cut ^{it} off to the last man.¹ It is mentioned in the ^{Assam Buranji} ~~A.B.~~ that, in 1505, Suhung received the Bhuyans in his court, and established permanently ~~a~~ cultural relations ^{with} between them.² So we believe that the Muslims were defeated and driven away by the Bhuyans with the aid of the Ahom king before 1505.

When treating this period the Assam Buranji records a romantic legend of a Gauda princess named Susuddhi, who is said to have been married to a Kamata king,³ and whose amorous adventures resulted in further Muslim invasions. The account contains no circumstantial detail and neither its dates nor its subject matter are consistent with other Buranjis. There seems to be no ground for believing this story, which has no echo in more reliable historical accounts, such as the Muslim chron^{is}icles and Vamsavalis. Hence, we do not refer at length to this tradition, the study of which in this context would be, we feel, a waste of time and space.

It is mentioned in the Kamrupar Buranji that a Kamrup king named Nagaksha built Bilvesvar temple in 1521.⁴ The Assam Buranji states that a Kamata king Durlabh by name was killed by Bisva Singha.⁵ It is recorded in

-
1. Riyazu-s-salatin, Trans. Abdu's Salam, Calcutta, 1890, pp. 132-33.
 2. Tamuli Phukan, A.B., p. 20. & J. A. S. B., 1894, p. 179.
 3. Bhuyan S.K., A.B., pp. 14-24.
 4. ~~L.K.R.B.~~ p. 100.
 5. Gunabhiram, A.B., p. 54.

the Rudra Singhar Buranji that Sucharuchand, son and successor ^{of} Durlabhendra, was dethroned and driven away in 1555, by Nara~~N~~arayan.¹ All these statements lead us to think that soon after the beginning of the sixteenth century, Hussain's troops left at Kamrup, were annihilated or expelled by the local chiefs aided by the Ahom king, and a new king of Kamata, whether a member of the Khan royal house or another, gained the throne of Kamata. We are inclined to think that that ruler was no other than Nagaksha of the Kamrupar Buranji.² He must have ruled at least up to the year 1521. We believe that this ruler and his successors must have ruled contemporaneously with the early Koches over a tract in eastern Kamrup under the vassalage of the Ahom kings, when Bisva Singha and Nara Narayan were consolidating their supremacy over the western half of Kamata. He was succeeded by his son Durlabh or Durlabhendra, who was contemporary to Bisva Singha, the founder of the Koch regime. In an engagement Durlabh must have been killed by Bisva Singh and his kingdom must have been annexed by the latter. Durlabh's reign might have been ended by 1540. On the death of his father in the hands of the Koches, Sucharuchand may have taken shelter with the Ahom king Suhungmung or his successor Suklemmung. With the help of the latter, Sucharuchand may have been succeeded in declaring himself Kamata king and exercising power over an eastern tract of Kamrup. In 1555, ^{the King of Kamata, probably} Sucharuchand ~~may have been~~ ^{was} defeated in a battle with the Koches, when his territory was permanently annexed to the Koch dominion by Nara Narayan.

1. Amanatulla, Kochbiharer Itihas, Kochbihar, 1936, p. 103.
2. K.R.B. p. 100.

Chapter VI

The Koches

In the early part of the nineteenth century, Buchanan estimated the numbers of the Koch people as 350,000. In the middle of the ^{same} ~~above~~ century, Hodgson observed that the number of the Koches could not be less than 800,000 souls, possibly even a million or a million and quarter.¹ At the present time the term Koch is applied to a good portion of the Hindu population of North Bengal and Western Assam. In Assam proper, it has become the name of a Hindu caste, into which the converts from the race of the Kachari, Lalung, Mikir and Garo are received. In North Bengal and Goalpara, they are known as Rajvangsis. In the days of the Puranas and Tantras, these people were called — Kuracha.

Racial origin:

Hodgson observed that in the Northern part of Bengal, towards Dalinkot, there appears to have been long located the most numerous and powerful people of the "Tamulian" extraction, which after the complete ascendancy of the Aryans had been established, was able to retain or recover political power or possession of the open plains.² As to their original ²habitat, Buchanan says that the primitive or Pani Koch live amid the woods, frequently changing their abode in order to cultivate land enriched by a fallow.³

Physical features:

The historian of Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khilji's invasion, says that the features of "the Koch, Mech and Tharu tribes" resembled those of a tribe of

-
1. Hodgson, B.H., Essay the first on Koch, Bodo and Dhimal tribes, Calcutta, 1847, p. 145.
 2. Ibid. p. 142.
 3. Ibid. p. 146.

Southern Siberia.¹ Hodgson is of the opinion that the Koches on or near the mountains, exhibit the Mongolian type of mankind more distinctly than the low-landers, and that they have, in general, a paler yellower hue than the latter, among whom there are some nearly as black as the Negroes.² Buchanan classed the Koch with the Bodos and the Dhimals. Dalton observed them to be of Dravidian origin, while Risely held them to be an intermixture of Mongolian and Dravidian, the characteristics of the latter predominating. Gait states that the Koches are a Mongoloid race, very closely allied to the Meches and Garos. In Jalpaiguri, Kochbehar and Goalpara, the persons known as Rajvangsis are either pure Koches, who, though dark, have a distinctly Mongoloid physiognomy, or else a mixed breed, in which the Mongoloid element usually predominates.³

Early history and time:

It is mentioned in the Assam Buranji that after the overthrow of Nilambar, the last Kamata king, by the Muhammadans under the leadership of Hussain Shah in 1498, two brothers named Chandan and Madan established a short government at Maralavasa, a place about thirty miles north of Kamatapur.⁴ Their power was only transient but seems to have extended over the major part of the kingdom of Kamata. At that time the parts of western Kamata which were not retained by Chandan and Madan, had fallen into anarchy under the chiefs of the neighbouring tribes. Among these tribes, by far the most powerful were the Koches, who had a number of chiefs at first independent

1. T.N. p. 560.

2. Hodgson, B.H., Essay the first on Koch, Bodo and Dhimal tribes, Calcutta, 1847, p. 150.

3. H.A. p. 47.

4. Gunabhiram, A.B., p. 52.

but who gradually united under the authority of one of themselves named Hajo. He seems to have been a person of great vigour, and reduced under his government the whole of Rangpur, together with a large portion of Assam, included in the government of Kamrup.¹ Hajo had two daughters Hira and Jira, who were married to Maria Mandal, the leader of the twelve families of Meches, (Panbar, Bhedela, Bhedbhedo, Barihana, Kathia, Guabar, Megho, Baihagu, Jesai, Garu Kata, Yuddhabar and Dekhera), of Chiknai hill in the Khuntaghat Pargana of Goalpara district. Hira gave birth to a son ^{named} Bisu ~~while~~ ^{and} Jira to another named Sisu.² From the above, it becomes apparent that Bisu and Sisu, the two sons of Maria Mandal, were born either at the end of the fifteenth or at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

Bisra Singha: (1515-1540)

Bisu was a born hero. His superior intelligence and uncommon courage ~~was~~ ^{were} manifested even in his childhood. He placed himself at the head of his followers and was joined by the men of the adjacent villages. As he grew up, he fought successfully with the neighbouring Bhuyans, Saru Bhuyan, Brahman Bhuyan, Chhuti Bhuyan, Kusum Bhuyan, Dighata Bhuyan, Kaliya Bhuyan, Jhargaya Bhuyan, Kabitas Bhuyan and Karnapur Bhuyan.³ It is interesting to note in this connection that he is said to have used firearms in the above battles with the different Bhuyans.⁴ From other references it would appear that by this time the use of firearms was becoming comparatively widespread in the

-
1. Robinson, W. A Descriptive Account of Assam, Calcutta, 1841, p. 152.
 2. D.A.B. pp. 160-1.
 3. D.R.V. p. 16.
 4. Ibid.

region. Following up this success, he defeated and slew the Bhuyans of Fulguri and Bejiniya (Bijni).¹ He gradually extended his power, subduing the neighbouring chiefs one after another till he made himself the master of a dominion extending as far as ^{the} Karatoya in the west and ^{the} Barnadi in the east.² He made a magnificent city in Kochbehar as his capital,³ and in 1527 assumed the name of Bisva Singha.⁴ He worshipped Siva and Durga and gave gifts to the disciples of Vishnu. He gave alms to the priests, and astrologers, and also to the poor and to the visitors from distant countries. He made his younger brother Sisu Yuvaraj (heir-apparent), and appointed twelve ministers from the twelve chief families of the Keches mentioned above. He also introduced a regular state organisation by appointing Thakurias, Saikias, Hajaris, Umraos and Nawabs. Excluding the old and the young, he took an account of his able-bodied male subjects, and found that the number of persons fit to carry arms amounted to not less than fifty-two lakhs and twenty-five thousands. He possessed numberless elephants, horses, asses, buffaloes, and camels.⁵

Bisva Singha's invasion of Assam:

It is mentioned in the Koch chronicles that Bisva Singha marched at the head of a large army against the Ahoms. After a long time and a hard journey, he ultimately reached Garhgaon, the capital of the Ahom king, with his vast army. It is said that he had to undertake this long journey with great

-
1. D.R.V. p. 22.
 2. Ibid. Introduction p. xiv.
 3. Ibid. p. 23.
 4. D.A.B. p. 162.
 5. D.R.V. pp. 26-49.

hardships, which along with the shortness of provisions and great difficulty of obtaining further supplies, caused him to return back to his capital without victory.¹ Assamese chronicles give a different account of this expedition. According to the latter, it is said that, with ^{the} ~~a~~ plan of invading Assam, Bisva Singha reached the Singari hill with a large navy, but he had to retreat owing to the shortage of provisions. But lest the Ahom king should take offence at this attack, he had to send an embassy praying for ~~apology~~ ^{pardon} and the Ahom king at last granted him royal dignity.² According to ^{the} ~~Deodhai~~ and Ahom Buranjis, this occurrence took place in 1537.³ In the above two chronicles, it is mentioned that Sisu and Bisu, sons of Sandia or Maria Mandal, coming from the hill Chiknai, offered Suhungaung, the Ahom king, two horses, one white and the other grey, a pictured girdle, a large spotted fly-brush, twenty white fly-brushes, ^{and} a long string of pearls and coral. Making an offer of these things, they humbly spoke the following to the heavenly king: "We, your slaves, pray your Majesty to help us in time of difficulty. If you assist us when we are pressed hard, we, your slaves, promise to pay you annual tributes." Suhungaung offered them some cows and buffaloes and ordered some of his men to accompany them.⁴ Bisva Singha died in 1540, after a rule of twenty-five years.⁵

Gunabhiram, in the Assam Buranji, gives an account of the re-discovery of Kamakhya by Bisva Singha. The story runs that he went to Nilachala, where

-
1. D.R.V., pp. 40-41.
 2. Barua, H.K., A.B., p. 28.
 3. D.A.B., p. 35.
 4. A.H.B., p. 77.

he found only a few houses of Meches. No one was at home except one old woman, who was resting under a fig-tree, where there was a mound which she said contained a deity. Bisva Singha prayed that reinforcements might arrive, and his prayer was at once granted. He, therefore, sacrificed a pig and a cock, and resolved, when the country could be restored to order, to build a golden temple there. He ascertained that the hill was the site of the old temple of Kanakhya, the ruins of which he discovered, while the image of the Goddess herself was dug up under the mound. Subsequently he re-built the temple, but, instead of making it of gold, he placed a gold coin between each brick. He brought Brahmans from Kananj, Mithila, Navadvip, Gaur and Banaras to religious ceremonies at this and other temples. He made his vassals the chiefs of Dimarua, Beltala, Rani, Luki, Bagai, Pantan, Bako, Bangaon, Mairapur, Bholagaon, Chaygaon, Barnagar, Darrang, Karaibari, Atiabari, Kanatabari and Balarampur. He also made a treaty with Devadharma, the king of Bhutan. In the frontier of his dominion, he appointed ^{officers called} Ujir, Laskar, Bhuyan, and Barua to save the subjects of the bordering territory from the raids of the neighbouring barbarians.¹ We know from Gunabhiram that in Bisva Singha's time Rangalugarh was the eastern boundary of Kochbehar.²

During the reign of Bisva Singha, there were hostilities more than once between the Ahoms and the Muhammadans, who advanced up the Brahmaputra as far as Kaliabar, ^{and who} when finally defeated in 1532, were pursued by the Ahoms as far as Karatoya, the region, which was at that time under the sway of Bisva Singha.

-
1. Gunabhiram, A.B., pp. 56-57.
 2. Ibid. pp. 54-57. A.H.B. pp. 66-69.
 3. Barua, H.K., A.B., pp. 23-25.

The reason of Bisva Singha's non-intervention against the invaders may be that the Koch capital was far removed from the route taken by the Muhammadans and that, although he had defeated the local chiefs on both sides of the Brahmaputra as far east as the Barnadi, he does not appear to have consolidated at that time his rule and brought that part of the country under his direct administration.¹

As regards the date of Bisva Singha's reign, the different authorities differ in their opinion. Buchanan says that "the Bihar Rajas reckon by the era of their ancestor, Visva, whom they suppose began to govern in the Bengal year 916 or A.D. 1509". Prasiddha Narayan's Vamsavali assigns 1534 as the date of the death of Bisva Singha. Following the above two authorities, Gait shows the reign of Bisva Singha to be from 1509 to 1534.² But it is mentioned in the Ahom Buranji that in 1537, Bisva Singha made a treaty with Suhungmung, the Ahom King.³ We have already shown the reliability of the chronology of the Assamese Buranjis, and we are inclined to accept the latter date. Therefore, Bisva Singha must have ruled up to 1537. Nilambar, the last Kamata king, was overthrown by Hussain Shah in 1498, and afterwards Chandra and Madan reigned for a period from Maratavasa, a place twenty miles north of Kamatapur. We know that the Muhammadans did not retain a permanent hold on the country, so it is not unreasonable to presume that Chandan and Madan ruled almost the whole of the country formerly under the sway of the Khyen kings and in such a case it would be impossible for Bisva Singha to have

-
1. Barua, *H.K.*, A.B., pp. 28-28.
 2. J.A.S.B., 1893, pp. 303-4.
 3. A.H.B., p. 77.

begun to rule before at least 1515 A.D. We have seen that Bisva Singha gradually rose from the position of one of many petty chiefs to be ruler of the whole country from Rangpur to Kamrup, and that he eventually found himself strong enough to march against the powerful Ahom king in Upper Assam. It is very unlikely that he could have effected all this in a shorter time than that allowed him according to the following calculation. Finally Darrangraj-Vansarati mentions twenty-five years as the duration of this reign,¹ and also states that Bisva Singha lived for a period after his Assam invasion,² which took place in 1537,³ therefore, the date of his accession and death can be taken as approximately 1515 and 1540 respectively.⁴

Nara Narayan, (1540-1581)

At the time of the death of Bisva Singha, two of his sons, Malla Deva and Sukladdhvaj, were at Banaras, where they had been sent to study under an ~~ascetic~~ ^{ascetic} named Brahmananda⁵. Nara Singha, one of the elder~~ly~~ sons of the deceased king ascended to the vacant throne.⁶ News of this occurrence was sent to Malla Deva and Sukladdhvaj by their nurse, when they hastened home and defeated Nara Singha in an open encounter. Nara Singha then fled with his son first to Morang, thence to Nepal, and finally to Kashmir. Being unable to cross the high mountain passes surrounding Kashmir, ^{the} two brothers gave up the pursuit and returned to their native country.⁷

1. H.A. pp. 48-49.

2. D.R.V. p. 51.

3. Ibid. p. 57.

4. Ibid. pp. 58-59.

5. D.R.V., pp. 59-60.

6. H.A. p. 25.

7. Sir Ashley Eden, Political Missions to Bhutan, p. 108. H.A. p. 60.

After the expulsion of Nara Singha, Malla Deb ascended his father's throne and assumed the name Nara Narayan. He made Sukladvaj the Juvaraj (heir-apparent), under the name of Sangram Singha.¹ He was a good warrior and became the commander-in-chief of the Koch army. In this capacity, he displayed such skill and promptness of action that he was nicknamed Chikarai or the "Kite King", during his expeditions against the people of Assam.²

War with the Ahoms

Soon after his accession to the throne, Nara Narayan determined to establish peace and order in the Koch kingdom. He inherited an army consisting of fifty-two lakhs, ~~and~~ twenty-five thousand Paiks from his father³ and with them defeated the rebellious chiefs of the country, who during the reign of his father frequently used to have caused trouble.⁴ Next he turned his attention to the extension of his kingdom, and first of all, he determined to carry out the decision formed by his father to conquer the Ahoms. The cause of the quarrel is uncertain. It is mentioned in the Assam Buranji that a petty chief or Bhuyan of the village Sujan, named Pandit Ramkha, conspired against Nara Narayan and ultimately took shelter with the Ahom king, who then took the offensive against the Koches.⁵ Another

1. D.R.V. pp. 61-62.

2. Ibid. p. 66.

3. Ibid. p. 62. The figure 5,225,000 may be an estimate of the adult male population of the kingdom, all of whom were liable in theory to military service. The figure is obviously exaggerated, and the author of the Vangsavale can hardly have believed it himself. Such exaggerations are common enough in our sources, but can easily be detected. As we shall see Nara Narayan's army, in one expedition, is later seen to have contained 40,000 men.

4. Gunabhirem, A.B. p. 57.

5. Ibid. p. 58.

authority states that one of the Ahom princes invaded the bordering Koch territory and killed three Koch princes, Dip Singha, Hendhar and Ramchandra, who were posted as the leaders of the Koch troops on the frontier.¹ Whatever the cause of the war might be, in 1546 an expedition of the Koch army was sent to the Ahom country, and on the bank of the Dikrai river, a battle with the Ahom soldiers took place. The Koches succeeded in killing some of the Ahom generals, when the Ahom army retreated first to Kaliabar and thence to Sala, where the battle concluded in favour of the Ahoms. This time the Ahom soldiers attacked the Koches with their elephants, and dispersed them after killing some of their leaders. Then the Koches proceeded towards the river Tilao for some time for further re-inforcements.² In the course of these operations the Koches constructed an embanked road from Their capital Kochbehar to Narayanpur in the south-west of present North Lakhimpur sub-division, a distance of some 350 miles. The work was carried out under the supervision of Gohain Kamal the king's brother; portions of it are still in existence and are known to this day as "Gohain Kamal's road."³ This undertaking was completed in 1547, and the Koches then erected a fort at Narayanpur. This time Suklenmung, the Ahom king, took a very stern attitude. He was just at the rear of ^{his} ~~the~~ enemies and posted his generals on different directions. He himself took the leadership of the fort on the river Pichata and thus, cutting off the supplies of the rivals, caused them to take the

-
1. Ananattulla, Kochbeharer Itihas. ~~K~~Kochbehar, 1936, p. 102. As is so common in works of this kind the author does not quote his source, which was presumably a local Vansavali not available to us.
 2. A.H.B. pp. 79-81.
D.A.B. pp. 37-38.
 3. Gunabhiram, A.B. p. 58.

offensive. The outcome was an absolute defeat for the Koches, ^{ma}~~any~~ of whom were slain and their arms were captured.¹ The battle is also mentioned in the Koch Vamsavale, which, however, gives no dates or details.

This decisive defeat of the Koches ^{at}~~in~~ the hands^{of} the Ahoms led to a cessation of hostilities between the two countries for some years. About this time it is mentioned in the Buranjis that, in 1553, Kalapahar, a general of the Bengal Nawab Sulaiman, launched an invasion on Assam. He is said to have made friends with the Koch king Nara Narayan. Instead of conquering the country, his main motive was to plunder the Hindu temples, which were said to ~~have~~ possessed enormous wealth and treasures. He had by-passed the central territory of the Koches and entered Kamrup through the Brahmaputra and plundered the KamaKhya and other Hindu places of pilgrimage of Assam by destroying the temples and monasteries.² According to J.N. Sarkar, he was a brother of ^{the} Afghan Sultan Sikandar Sur and during ^{the latter's} ~~his~~ reign launched upon the career of temple-breaking, which has made hisname a by-word of terror. The Buranjis agree with the Muslim sources on the date when he is said to have demolished the temples of Hajo and Kamakhya.³ ~~Kalapahar, otherwise known as Raju, started his career as an officer of Afghan Sur Sultans, who ruled Bengal from 1539-1564.~~ According to the local traditions, he was a convert from Hinduism, and, ^{most} like ~~all~~ apostates, was a zealous persecutor of the faith which he had before professed, so that his name is remembered to this day both in Assam and Orissa, as the arch destroyer of temples and images. In the middle of the sixteenth century, when Nara Narayan was

1. A.H.B. p. 81.

D.A.B. p. 36.

2. Gunabhiram A.B. pp. 58-59.

3. H.B. Vol. II, p. 178.

deeply engaged ⁱⁿ ~~with~~ conquests and battles with the Ahoms and other north-eastern tribes of Assam, Kalapahar, "who was singular for his skill in river-fighting",¹ must have launched an invasion through the Brahmaputra unresisted and ~~dy~~^estroyed the temples at Kamakhya and Hajo.¹ In 1565, when, at the death of his brother Taj Khan, Sulaiman became the ruler of Bengal, which he was already governing as his brother's deputy, Kalapahar was, appointed a general ^{under} ~~to~~ him.² He is said to have helped Sulaiman to build up a rich treasury by raiding Orissa and Kochbehar, and he extended his hold over the unsubdued Bengal districts north and east of the capital at Tanda (Gaur). It was Kalapahar, who fought successfully and repulsed the first attack on Gaur by Nara Narayan in 1565, when the ever-victorious Koch prince Chilarai, or Suladhravaj the yuvaraj, was made captive in the hands of the Sultan of Gaur.³ In 1568, from the neighbourhood of Jajpur (the then capital of North Orissa), the invading Afghan army sent off a strong detachment under Kalapahar to raid the temple of Jagannath in Puri, which was famous for the wealth accumulated in it.⁴ In 1572, at the death of Sulaiman, when his younger son Daud came to the throne of Bengal, Kalapahar continued to hold his office under him. In 1576, Khan-i-Jahan, vice-roy of Akbar, attacked the Afghans near Rajmahal, when Kalapahar fought as a general of Daud Khan, who was taken prisoner and beheaded as a treaty-breaker. At that time, Kalapahar fled from the field of battle, receiving several wounds in his body.⁵ Finally we find Kalapahar fighting against Khan-i-Azam, the

-
1. Riyaz-us-Salatin, p. 151-52, transl. Abdus Salam, Calcutta, 1890.
 2. H.A., p. 54. H.B. Vol. II, pp. 181-182.
 3. H.B. Vol. II, p. 183.
 4. Ibid. pp. 194-195.
 5. Ibid. p. 202.

vice~~er~~oy of Akbar, in 1583, during the third conquest of Bengal. The veteran renegade hero was ~~then~~ killed in this battle.¹ Kalapahar appears to have left no mark in the countries, he invaded, beyond his fanatic acts of sacrilege and iconoclasm. Though he is referred to in the Buranjis, nothing is mentioned of Kalapahar in the Koch Vamsarali, except incidentally in the statement that Nara Narayana rebuilt Kamakhya which the wicked Mussalmans had destroyed.²

Sucharuchand: (1555-)

One of the Assam Buranjis mentions that in 1555, Nara Narayan drove away Sucharuchand from his small principality on the border of the Koch kingdom, which he succeeded to from his father Durlabh, who founded it by the help of the Ahom king, after Durlabh's father had been dethroned by Hus~~ain~~ Shah in 1498.³ In this connection Amanatulla says that at this time (1555) one of the petty chiefs or Bhuyans in the Koch kingdom rebelled against Nara Narayan and took shelter with the Ahom king Suklemung, who then attacked the Koch king.⁴ But we have already shown⁵ that this occurrence took place before 1546, when Nara Narayan first attacked the Ahom country, and at that time the Ahom king was Suklemung who ruled from 1539-1552. In 1555, Sukhampha was the Ahom king, whose reign begins from 1552, at the death of Suklemung. Hence Amanatulla does not record these events in their true historical sequence. It is said that during the year 1555 and 1556, there were exchange

1. H.B. Vol. II, p. 202.

2. D.R.V., p. 105.

3. Rudra Singhar Buranji, p. 38.

4. Kochbeharer Itihas, Amanatulla, Kochbehar, 1936, p. 103.

5. See p. 181-82.

of letters and embassies between NaraNarayan and Sukhampha for ^atheir mutual compromise, but all these moves were without definite diplomatic outcome.¹

It is mentioned in the Vamsavali, that Nara Narayan conquered Cachar, Manipur, Jayantia, Tippera, Sylhet, Khairam and Dimarua, but nowhere can we find the dates when the conquests in question actually took place. Gait refers to these conquests as occurring just after the final defeat of the Ahoms in 1563.² But he does not appear to be correct.

It is mentioned in the Ahom Buranjis that the Ahoms were finally defeated by the Koches in 1563. We know that the temple of Kamakhya was rebuilt by NaraNarayan in 1565, and it is mentioned in the Vamsavali that Kamakhya was rebuilt after the first invasion of Gaur by Nara Narayan, when Chilarai became a prisoner. In this connection, Gait himself recognizes that all the Koch conquests must have taken considerable time, stressing "the difficulties of locomotion at that time, and the fact that between each war it would probably be necessary for the Raja to spend sometime attending to the internal affairs of his kingdom and consolidating his rule,"³ Yet between Nara Narayan's conquest of the Ahoms in 1563 and the defeat of his expedition against Gaur only two years elapsed. The sequence of events after the latter campaign is clearly stated in our sources, and will be discussed in detail below; here it is sufficient to say that after Nara Narayan's first campaign against Gaur there was no time for the conquests of the states of the

-
1. ~~Barnes, H.K., A.P., pp.~~ Amanatulla, Kochbharor Stihar, Kochbhar, 1936, pp. 104-05.
 2. H.A.A., p. 52.
 3. H.A.S.B. 1892, p. 303.

Assam hills. It seems much more probable that they were already conquered when Nara Narayan defeated the Ahoms in 1563. Therefore, it can be safely said that the above conquests of Nara Narayan took place ~~in~~ between 1547 and 1562. It is reasonable to think that only after conquering the neighbouring petty chiefs and rulers did the Koches try their power with the mighty Ahoms of the north-east, and only after conquering the whole of north-eastern India, would they have decided to attack the more powerful Muhammadan ruler of Gaur.

Conquest of Kachari Kingdom

After his first unsuccessful campaign against the Ahom Raja, Nara Narayan decided to conquer the Hedamba or the kingdom of the Kacharis. The ~~Vam~~ Vamsavali says that this time also the Koch army was led by redoubtable Chilarai, who easily overcame the Kachari king at his capital. After submission Hedambesvar gave eighty-four elephants and other presents, and the Koches left his kingdom on condition that he would pay an annual tribute of 70,000 silver rupees, ~~and~~ 1,000 gold mohars, and sixty elephants.¹

Submission of the Manipur king.

Nara Narayan then sent messengers to the king of Manipur, asking him to submit and pay tribute, and the Raja, feeling himself too weak to resist such a powerful monarch, at once carried out his order. His tribute was fixed yearly at 20,000 rupees, 300 gold coins, and ten good elephants. The king is said to have paid the first instalment with 20,000 rupees, 1,000 gold coins, and forty elephants.²

1. D.R.V. pp; 74-75.

2. Ibid. pp. 79-81.

Victories over Jayantia and Tipperakings.

The next expedition was sent against the king of Jay^{ya}ntia, who was killed by Chilarai in open battle. Then, at the requests of the subjects of the Jayantia Kingdom, Nara Narayan set up the deceased Raja's son on the throne after making him promise to pay an annual tribute consisting of seventy horses, ten thousand silver coins, and three hundred sharp swords; in the first instance he had to present one hundred horses, ten thousand rupees, one thousand gold coins, and one hundred swords. It is said that one of the conditions imposed on him was that he should not in future strike coins in his own name.¹ In confirmation of the above statement Gait observed "that until the year 1731, no king of Jayantia appears to have recorded his name on the coins minted by him; on all known coins of an earlier date, as on most of the later ones also, the words "ruler of Jayantia" are used instead of the Raja's name."²

Then another expedition of the Koch Soldiers was sent under the leadership of Chilarai, against the Raja of Tippera. It is said that this time the Koch army consisted of 40,000 men, and that in the battle which took place, no fewer than 18,000 men of the Tippera army were slain. The king is said to have been killed by Chilarai himself. Nara Narayan ordered to place the deceased king's brother on the vacant throne, and fixed an annual tribute of 2,000 gold coins, a first tribute having been paid of 10,000 silver coins, 100 gold coins and 30 war-horses.³ It is stated in the history of

1. D.R.V., pp. 81-82.

2. H.A., p. 53.

3. D.R.V., pp. 82-83. It is surprising that so heavy a tribute of gold should have been levied, when such a small quantity was paid in the first instance. Can it be that the Vamsavalī has 'gold' in error for 'silver'?

Cachar that during the time of the conquest of Tip^era by Nara Narayan the northern part of Chittagong was under the jurisdiction of Tippera Raj. Nara Narayan having conquered Tippera, is said to have stationed a group of soldiers ^{there,} ~~by~~ constructing a fort near Brahmapur, which was ^{then} named ~~then~~ Kochpur and ^{is} now called Khaspur.¹

Submission of the chiefs of Khairan and Dimerua.

Gunilanta, (or Viryyavanta), the Raja of Khairan, knowing the prowess and ambitions of Nara Narayan, is said to have voluntarily made his submission to avoid the fate which had overtaken the kings of Jayantia and Tippera. He presented for the first time to Nara Narayan, sixty horses, forty strong tuskers, forty thousand rupees, and one thousand gold coins, and prayed to be allowed to mint coins in his own name, which request it is said was not granted. His tribute was fixed at fifteen thousand rupees, nine hundred gold coins, fifty horses and thirty elephants. The Vamsavali says that this king at last was granted the favour of minting coins not in his own name but in ^{that} ~~his~~ of Nara Narayan.²

The next victory of Nara Narayan, was over Panth^asvar Raja, of Dimerua, who was a descendant of king Mriganka, a later Kamata king. After a considerable battle with the Koch army, the Dimerua chief is said to have become a prisoner in the hands of Chilarai. He was subsequently released on condition of paying an annual tribute of seven thousand rupees.³

-
1. Amanatulla, Kochbeharer Itihas, p. 112.
 2. D.R.V., pp. 84-86.
 3. D.R.V., pp. 86-89.

Change of the course of the Brahmaputra.

In the course of these expeditions, Nara Narayan is said to have employed his troops to straighten the course of the Brahmaputra opposite Pandunatha, a place near the foot of the Nilachal hill, some four miles west of Gauhati. The new course of the Brahmaputra was named after this event as Khargasrota¹ (sword stream) because it was made as straight as a sword.

Conquest of Sylhet.

After stopping for some time at a village called Raha, Nara Narayan determined to attack the Padshah of Sirat (Sylhet), whose kingdom is described as being near Jayantia, and who is said to have been very powerful. Messengers were sent asking him to submit, but on his refusal to do so, Chitarai proceeded with a strong force to overcome him. He met the army of the Sylhet king, and a battle took place which lasted for three days. At the end of the third day, as the balance of victory still hung in favour of the Koches, Chilarai became impatient and so he rushed forward to attack the hostile army. It is said that 100,000 soldiers fell before his all-destroying sword, and that at last the king of Sylhet himself was slain with a blow of Chilarai's sword. The Padshah's brother, Asirai then tendered his submission and returned with Chilarai to the court of Nara Narayan with a present of one hundred elephants, nine hundred horses, 300,000 rupees and 10,000 gold coins. Nara Narayan at last out of pity appointed him Padshah in place of his deceased brother and fixed his annual tribute at 300,000 rupees, 10,000 gold coins, 100 elephants and 200 good horses.²

-
1. D.R.V., p. 87.
 2. Ibid. pp. 90-96.

After conquering the kingdoms ^{that} intervened between the Ahoms and the Koches in 1562, Nara Narayan, the king of the latter, decided to try his power with the Ahoms. Gait gives us the reason for this fresh rivalry the fact that the Koches were accused of raiding some Ahom villages in the course of their operation¹ against the Kacharis, but he never mentions his source. Here he does not appear to be correct. Both the parties had long been mutually hostile and the Koches under Nara Narayan at that time were maintaining an era of "Digvijaya". From the point of view of the sources available to us, the Koches wantonly attacked the Ahoms, and we have no reference to unintentional transgression of the frontier. A force under the leadership of ~~Teju~~ and Bhaktamal crossed the Ahom frontier and ascended through the Brahmaputra up to Sala. Next they encamped at Diklanmukh. In a march engagement on the Handia river, the Ahoms appear to have been worsted. Four of their generals along with a large number of infantry were killed in the battle and many of them became prisoners into the hands of the Koches. In spite of this the Ahoms did not stop fighting.²⁻⁻

In January, 1563, Chilarai himself arrived with reinforcements. After a decisive battle the Ahoms were completely defeated. First the Koches occupied Majuli and thence to Garhgaon, the capital, and hoisted their flag upon the Ahom palace. The Ahom king along with his nobles and family members took shelter in the Naga hills. After a few months the Ahom capital was evacuated by the Koches on condition of the acknowledgement of the Koch suzerainty, the cession of a considerable tract of the Ahom territory on the

1. H.A. p. 100.

2. A.H.B. pp. 84-85.

north bank of the Brahmaputra, the delivery of a number of sons of the nobles as hostages, and the payment of a war indemnity, of 60 elephants, 60 pieces of cloth, and a large quantity of gold and silver. A garrison of the Koch army was stationed at Narānpur^{8a} to hold the Ahom territory.¹

War with Padshah of Gaur

Being thus victorious in north, east and south, Nara Narayan determined to invade the kingdom of Gaur in the west, in order to avenge the misdeeds of Kalapahar who invaded Assam in 1553 and destroyed the Hindu temples. Muslim sources show that Nara Narayan invaded Gaur in 1567.² It is mentioned in the Vamsavali that before this invasion Nara Narayan visited the temple of KamaKhyā which he found in ruins. He intended to rebuild it, but ultimately he postponed this pious act until^{1565.} ^{So, according to Vamsavali,} his proposed expedition was completed^{before 1565.} This time the Koch army under the leadership^{or} of Chilarai was defeated by the Padshah of Gaur, after a fight which lasted for ten days. Chilarai himself performed prodigies of valour, and after his weapons had been broken he disdained to fly, and so continued to fight until he became a prisoner in the hands of the Padshah.⁴ After some years of captivity the Koch prince Sukladhvaj was set free, evidently when the Pathan Wazir Mian Ludi decided to secure a strong friend^{or} on his northern frontier in view of the inevitable contest with the Mughal empire which was coming nearer and nearer.⁵ As a result^{the} Kartoya was fixed as the boundary between the two kingdoms, and thus, in the legends; Baharband, Bhitarband, Gayabari, Serpur and DasKania and North

1. A.H.B. p. 86-87 and D.A.B., pp. 41-42.
2. Riyazu-s-salatin, transl. Abdus Salam, Calcutta, 1890, p. 152.
3. D.R.V. pp. 98-99.
4. The Vamsavali gives a romantic story, pp. 101-04.
5. See p. 193.

Mymensingh, which were under the Muhammadans' rule, ^{were} ~~and~~ annexed to the Koch kingdom.¹

In 1564, in order to cultivate good relations henceforward, Nara Narayan released all the Ahom hostages along with Sondar Gohain, who were brought to the Koch capital in 1563, after the defeat of the Ahoms.^{2(a)} In 1565, Nara Narayan rebuilt the Kamakhya temple with bricks.^{2(b)} He made a grant of land for the maintenance of the shrine, and gave away alms to the extent of 25,000 rupees. He also caused two statues of himself and Chilarai ^{respectively} to be made and placed within the temple, where they are still in existence. At this time he caused roads, monasteries and tanks to be constructed, and trees to be planted. Under his auspices the Sastras were published and the Ratnamata was composed, and even the common people were made to study religious books. Saktism was the state religion, but Vaishnavism was more than tolerated, and great honour was ^{paid} ~~done~~ to Sankaradev, the great Vaishnava reformer, Deva Damodara, and other Vaishnava divines. The country enjoyed a period of peace and prosperity, and trade and commerce thrived exceedingly.³

It is said in the Vamsavali that a few years later Nara Narayan combined with Akbar to attack the Padshah of Gaur. Chilarai invaded his kingdom from the east, while Raja Nasi Singh, who was in command of the imperial army, advanced upon him from the west. The ruler of Gaur, being thus attacked from two sides at the same time, was easily defeated, and his kingdom was then divided between the Koch king and the Emperor of Delhi.⁴ According to the

1. H.B. Vol. II, p. 178.

2(a). A.H.B., p. 88.

3. D.R.V., pp. 104-109.

4. Ibid. pp. 110-113.

2(b). See p. 40.

Akbarnamah, this occurrence took place in 1574, after the conquest of Patna by Akbar himself. It is mentioned there that Munim Khan was sent from Patna at the head of 20,000 men to conquer Bengal. The Delhi cavalry guided by the local zemindars made a detour through the Rajmahal hills and turned the Garhi pass on its southern side, while another force made a demonstration in front of it. The Afghan soldiers in the capital fled without a fight and Munim Khan entered Tanda (Gaur), the capital of Bengal, without resistance.¹ Evidently the zemindars mentioned above cannot be other than the Koches, because we know at that time the Karatoya was the border between the kingdoms of Daud Khan and Nara Narayan. The Koches and the Muhammadans were the paramount authority of their respective regions. We have no evidence of other local chiefs in Bengal or petty zemindars in the Koch region to help the imperial army. In 1586, Khan-i-Jahan, the viceroy of Akbar, defeated the Afghans near Rajmahal, and Daud was taken a prisoner and beheaded.² It is mentioned in the Ain-i-Akbari that at this time Nara Narayan renewed his demonstration of obedience to the imperial throne and sent fifty-four elephants and other valuable presents to Akbar.³

In the course of the second expedition of Gaur, in 1571, Chilarai was attacked by smallpox and died on the banks of the Ganges. He had a son named Raghudeb, who was given into the care of Nara Narayan. After Chilarai's death, a long period of peace ensued, during which the people enjoyed great prosperity, while Nara Narayan gave such encouragement to religion that he

-
1. Akbarnamah III, p. 150-53. H.B. Vol. II, p. 186.
 2. Ibid. pp. 260-66, & *Ibid.* p. 194.
 3. H.B. Vol. II, p. 194. H.A. p. 55.

became known as "the pious King".¹ According to one of the Ahom Buranjis, available to Gait, which we have not been able to trace, it is stated that a rebellion occurred in 1577, headed by three men named Bar Dado, Gabha Naik and Bar Katu. Being chased by Nara Narayan, they fled with 14,000 of their followers to the Ahom country and settled at Gajala.²

The Akbar Nama states that Mal gohain (i.e. Malladev or Nara Narayan) was childless, and had nominated his nephew Raghu Deb, son of Shukla Gohain, (i.e. Sukladhvaj or Chila Rai) as heir apparent; he was, however, persuaded to marry (presumably implying to marry again) by his brother when well advanced in middle age. As a result of this late marriage he produced a son, Lakshmi Narayan, who became heir apparent.³ This led to the disaffection of Raghudeb, which was fanned by some of his father's old followers; and at last under the pretence of making a journey, Raghu collected his family and adherents and proceeded to Barnagar on the Manas river, where he built a town called Ghilajaipur. Nara Narayan sent men to recall him, and on his refusal, instead of making war with his kinsmen, the peace-loving king agreed to divide the kingdom, keeping the portion west of the river Sankosh for himself and his successors and giving up to Raghudev the tract east of that river. He thus ruled the country now included in the Mangaldai subdivision and the districts of Kamrup and Goalpara; his dominion stretched southwards from the Goalpara boundary, and included the country between the old course of the Brahmaputra and the Garo hills which now forms the eastern part of Mymensingh. In 1581

1. D.R.V. pp. 113-119.

2. H.A., p. 55.

3. Amanatulla, Kochbeharer Itihas, p. 135.

Raghu made his capital at Baranagar.¹ He visited five places of pilgrimage, - Ganesa, Kodara, Gokarna, Garua and Kamesvara, and rebuilt the Manikuta temple (of the God Hayagriva) at Hajo on the Manik Hill. An inscription on the temple, dated 1583, mentions Raghudev as the king under whose orders, it was rebuilt. He is said to have been devoted to religion and to have made liberal gifts to Brahmans.² In 1584, he made a matrimonial alliance with the powerful Ahom king Sukhanpha, no doubt in order to strengthen his still rather precarious position.

Raghu's war with Isa Khan:

Raghu soon came into conflict with an Afghan named Isa Khan, the Bhuyan of Khairpur, near Narayanguj in Dacca. He was already a powerful chief in the time of the Bengal Padshah Daulat Khan. When, in 1576, the latter was overthrown by Khan Jahan, Isa Khan became the leader of the Afghans throughout the eastern part of Bengal, and at one time he ruled the whole country from Ghoraghat to the sea. He was defeated by Shahbaz Khan in 1583 and fled by ship to Chittagong. He there collected a body of troops, and, with their aid he proceeded to carve out for himself a new kingdom. Encouraged no doubt by the death of Chilarai and the family strife and dissensions of the Koches, he selected for his first operations the southern outlying portion of the tract assigned by Nara Narayan to his rebellious nephew. Raghu endeavoured to resist the invaders in person, and occupied a fort near the village of Jangahbari in the district of Mytensingh. It was surrounded by a moat, but

-
1. Gunabhiram, A.B. pp. 62-63.
 2. Darangraj Vamsavali, pp. 128-130.

the defenders were not able to hold it against the vigorous onslaught of Isa Khan and his men. Raghu himself escaped by a tunnel while the assault was in progress. Following up his victory Isa Khan took from the Koches the whole country as far as Rangumati in the Goalpura district.¹

In 1536, at the death of Nara Narayan, his son Lakshmi Narayan succeeded to the throne of ^{the} western Koch kingdom, which included the present districts of Kochbehar, Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri, and Rangpur.² Henceforward, the western Koch kingdom became a separate state with its capital at the present Kochbehar, and had no bearing on the history of Assam; we shall occasionally refer to it in connection with the eastern Koch kingdom of Assam.

On the death of Nara Narayan, Raghudov declared himself independent and struck coins in his own name. He then refused to acknowledge the supremacy of Lakshmi Narayan. Next Raghu, in 1596, making alliance with Isa Khan, the powerful zamindar of East Bengal, attacked the bordering territory of Lakshmi Narayan, who then begged the protection of the Mughals. Man Singh, then the viceroy of Bengal, hastened to his aid from Salimnagar to Govindapur, where Lakshmi Narayan came and welcomed him and gave his sister Prabhavati in marriage. ~~to him~~. Raghu and Isa Khan took flight on hearing of Man Singh's prompt advance. Thus the western Koch kingdom became a vassal state of the Mughal Empire. In 1597, Raghu having collected a force, again seized some portions of Lakshmi Narayan's territory, when Man Singh sent a detachment and defeated Raghu. Next Raghu called Isa Khan again to his side to fight the imperial forces. Mansingh sent a force under his son Durjan Singh, to attack

-
1. Wise, on the Baro Bhuyans of Eastern Bengal (J.A.S.B. 1874, p. 213).
Blochmann's translation of the Ain-i-Akbari, p. 343. H.A.P. 62.
 2. Gunabhiran, A.B. p. 64.

Katrabhu, in Isa Khan's territory. The combined army of Isa Khan and Raghu surrounded the Mughal ^detachment in overwhelming force, slew Durjan Singh and many of his troops and took some prisoners. Later on, a peace was concluded between the imperial power on one side and Isa Khan and Raghu on the other, in which the latter gave up his attack on Laksimi Narayan.¹

It is mentioned in the Vamsavali that Raghu ruled for thirty-two years and on his death was succeeded by his son Parikshit.²

Gunabhiran says that the accession of Raghu Dev took place in 1531. Coins of Raghu exist which are dated 1583.³ But the inscription inside the temple at Hajo solves the problem. It is mentioned in the inscription that "the king Raghu coming of age had a temple built on the hillock called Mani Hillock in S.E. 1505 (A.D. 1583)."⁴ So in ^{the} absence of any contrary evidence, the date shown by Gunabhiran can be accepted as true. But the issue is different as to the date of his death and the accession of Parikshit. It is mentioned in the Vamsavali that Raghu ruled for thirty-two years.⁵ Gunabhiran says that his death took place in 1593, which date was at first accepted by Sir Edward Gait.⁶ The Padishanamah states that Parikshit was ruling when Jahangir came to the throne in 1605. So Raghu must have died before that date. It is mentioned in the Assam Duranji that Raghu gave his daughter named Mangaldai in marriage to the Ahom king Sukthampha, who ruled from 1552 to 1603.⁷ Therefore, Raghu must have died in or before 1603. It is

-
1. H.B. Vol. II. p. 212.
 2. D.R.V., p. 132.
 3. H.A. p. 63.
 4. J.A.S.B. 1893, p. 296.
 6. Ibid., p. 304.
 5. D.R.V. p. 132.
 7. Barua H.K., A.B., p. 37.

mentioned in the Vamsavali that Parikshit minted coins on his accession.¹ A coin of Parikshit has been found, dated 1603.² Therefore, 1603, can be taken as the date for the death of Raghu dev and the accession of Parikshit. It is said that in 1571, at the time of the second expedition of the Koches against Gaur, Chilarai died on the bank of the Ganges, having been attacked by smallpox.³ Therefore, it may be that the author of the Vamsavali counted the regnal years of Raghu from the date of his father's death, rather than from the date of his accession, which took place about ten years later.

A list of the subsequent eastern Koch rulers:

Parikshit Narayan
 Balinarayan
 Mahendra Narayan
 Chandra Narayan
 Suryya Narayan
 Indra Narayan
 Aditya Narayan
 Dhraj Narayan
 Madhu Narayan
 Dhir Narayan
 Mahat Narayan
 Darlabh Narayan
 Hangsa Narayan
 Kirti Narayan 4

-
1. D.R.V. p. 138.
 2. H.A., p. 60.
 3. Amanatulla, Kochbeharer Itihas, p. 119.
 4. Gunabhiram, A.B., pp. 65-71.

CHAPTER VII.The Kacharis

The Kacharis are the earliest known indigenous inhabitants of Assam. They are known under different names in different places and ages throughout the north-eastern corner of the Indian sub-continent. In Goalpara and north Bengal, they are called Mach and in north Cachar Hills, Dimasa. In the Brahmaputra valley, the Kacharis call themselves Bodo or Bodo-fisa (sons of the Bodo). They were known to the Ahoms as Pimisa, clearly a corruption of Dimasa, and, therefore, this name must have applied to them when they were ruling the Dhansiri valley.¹

Apart from the outlying members of the race, there are within the limits of Assam itself at least 1,000,000 souls, probably many more, who belong to the Kachari race. In addition to the Kacharis proper, Mr. Endle has classed the following tribes of Assam within the fold of the great Bodo race, - Rabha, Mach, Dhimal, Koch, Solanimiyas, Mahaliyas, Phulgurias, Saraniyas, Dimasa, Hojais, Lalungs, Garos and Hajongs. "To these," says Mr. Endle, "may be added one or two smaller communities e.g., the Morans and the Chutias in Upper Assam, whose language, not altogether extinct as yet though apparently dying out rapidly, would seem to prove them to be closely akin to the Kachari (Bodo) race".²

As with other races and tribes of ancient and medieval India, the origin of the Kacharis is also difficult to trace. From their physical features and general appearance, they seem to be of Mongolian type; and this would point their original home being somewhere in Tibet or China. According to

1. Edward Gait, A History of Assam, p. 247.

2. S. Endle, The Kacharis, pp. 4-5.

Garos tradition, their forefathers, the offspring of Hindu and Tibetan blood, came down from the northern mountains, and after a halt at Koch-Bihar, made their way to Jogighopa, and thence across the Brahmaputra to Dalgoma, and so finally into the Garo Hills.¹

Captain Fisher, the first Superintendent of Cachar, was of the opinion that the Kacharis gradually acquired an empire over Assam, Sylhet, Mymensing, and the valleys to the east of the Brahmaputra, their original seat being at Kamarupa; and that their rule ultimately embraced everything from Kamrupa down to the sea. They built brick cities, and it is supposed that the Tipparah Raja was a younger son of the house, the original empire being divided into a northern and southern part.² Sir Edward Gait was of the opinion that the Kacharis are very closely allied to the Koches and also, so far as the language is concerned, to the Chutias, Lahungs, and Morans of the Brahmaputra valley, and to the Garos and the Tipperas of the southern hills. Having regard to their wide distribution, and to the extent of country over which Bodo languages of a very uniform type are still current, it seems not improbable that at one time the major part of Assam and north-east Bengal formed a great Bodo kingdom, and that some, at least, of the Melechha kings mentioned in the old copper-plate inscriptions belonged to the Kachari or some closely allied tribe.³ Mr. C.A. Soppith says that the Kachari race originally inhabited the hills and slopes to the north of the Brahmaputra, and then gradually extended through central Assam to the

-
1. *Ibid.* pp. 3-4.
Garo ethnography.
 2. Captain Fisher, *Memoir of Sylhet Kachar and the adjacent Districts*, J.A.S.B. IX., Part II, 1840, pp. 829-30.
 3. E. Gait, *A History of Assam*, p. 248.

Mymensingh district, the head-quarters of the Raj being established at Ganhati.¹

Mr. J.E. Webster says that the eldest son of the second king of Tippera is said to have married the Kachari Raja's daughter and succeeded to the throne of Cachar. There was a time when the kingdom of the Tipperas was contiguous to Hirimba or Cachar.² Rev. S. Endle says that the Kachari race were the original antechthrones of Assam, and form a large, perhaps the main constituent element in the permanent population of the province.³ He is of the opinion that there were two great immigrations from the north and north-east into the rich valley of the Brahmaputra - one entering north-east Bengal and Western Assam through the valley of the Tista Dharta, Sankosh and founding there what was formerly the powerful kingdom of Kamarupa; and the other making its way through the subansiri, Dirbong and Dirhong valleys into Eastern Assam, where a branch of the widespread Kachari race, known as Chutias, undoubtedly held sway for a long period.⁴ As we have seen we believe that the Kacharis or a branch of them, the Chutias, invaded Assam by way of the Subansiri.⁵ According to the Limbu legend of creation, it is said that one of the two progenitors of the human race settled in the Khachar country, which is the name given by the Nepalese to the tract at the foot of the hills between the Brahmaputra and the Kosi rivers, and at this region,

-
1. C.A. Soppith. *An Historical and Descriptive Account of the Kachari Tribes*, Shillong, 1885, p.1.
 2. J.E. Webster, *Eastern Bengal District Gazetteers, Tippera*, pp. 11-12.
 3. S. Endle, *The Kacharis*, London, 1911, pp.7-8.
 4. *Ibid.*
 5. See p. 223.

in course of time, the Koch, Mech and Dhimal tribes came into existence.¹ The word 'Khachar' is said by Gait to be derived from a Sanskrit word meaning a 'bordering region', but we are unable to find any such word in Standard Sanskrit Dictionaries. In Bengali 'Kachar' means the 'deep bank of a river'. If Kachar was an early home of the Mech, or the headquarters of a powerful Mech dynasty, the members of the tribe in Assam may have been called Kacharis. The district of Cachar may have got its name directly from this word, or it may have been so called after its principal tribe. In any case it is evident that the Kacharis did not get their name from the present district of Cachar. They are known by that name in many parts far removed from the district of that name, and were so called long before a section of the tribe took possession of that district.² About their first home in Assam, the Kacharis themselves believe that they lived originally in a land called Kamruli (Kamrup) by which flowed a river in a great valley; then they were driven out and got to a place called Kundilo (Kundil or Sadiya).³

According to B.C.Allen, the Kacharis are a section of the Indo-Chinese race, whose original habitat was somewhere between the upper waters of the Yang-tse-kiang and the Hoang-ho, and who gradually spread in successive waves of immigration over the greater part of what is now the province of Assam, entering by way of Burma.⁴ This theory is to be recommended on the grounds that, apart from the southward movement of the Miris and Chutias, most of the tribal migrations have been from the south towards the north. This was the direction of the Ahom

¹ Wisely, Tribes and Castes of Bengal, H.A. p.247.

² H.A. pp. 247-48.

³ ~~Wiser~~ A.C.R. 1931, pt. I. J.H.Grace, Note on the Hill Kacharis, App. B.P. VIII. , Kachari Buranji, Introduction xiii.

⁴ A.D.C., Sibsagar, p.17.

invasion in the thirteenth century, the traditions of the Nagas all represent them as coming from the South, and the northward movement of the Kuki tribes was only stopped by the intervention of the British Government. On the other hand Mr. Dundas, a former officer of north Cachar, reports that an old prayer was, fifty years ago, still in use amongst the Dimasa which refers to a huge papur tree growing near the confluence of the Dilao (Brahmaputra) and the Sagi. There the Kacharis were born and increased greatly in numbers, and thence they travelled till they reached Nilachal, the hill near Gauhati on which the temple of Kamakhya stands. From Nilachal they migrated to Halali, and finally settled in Dimapur.¹

The copper plates of the eleventh century record that the dynasty of Naraka had been displaced by Salastambha, a ~~Mlechha~~ or foreign conqueror, whose line ended in the person of Sri Harsa, and was succeeded by another family of foreign princes, the first of whom was Pralambha and the last Tyaga Simha. The dynasty of Naraka was then restored in the person of Brahmapala.² We know the dates of the succession of Salastambha and Pralambha as being 664 and 800 A.D.³ If the assumption of power by the Mlechhas corresponds with the great irruptions of the Bedos, then the Kacharis were in a very powerful position from the latter part of the seventh century A.D. Mr. B.C. Allen says that ~~at the time when~~ the Nowgong copper plate belongs to the latter end of the tenth century A.D.⁴ If the ~~Mlechha~~ chief, who overthrew the line of Naraka, was a Kachari king, then

-
1. B.C. Allen, A.D.G. Cachar, pp.19-20.
 2. History of Assam, Gait, p. 30.
 3. J.A.S.B. Vol. LXX, pp.113, 285.
 4. B.C. Allen, A.D.G. Nowgong, pp.21-22.

it may not be unlikely that when driven from Gauhati by Brahmapala in ^{c.} 1,000 A.D.¹ the Kacharis had retreated to the valley of the Dhansiri and established their capital at Dimapur. It is also said that Jangal Balahu, son of the famous Arimatta, whose capital was at Sahari Mauza, about two miles west of Raha, was engaged in constant feuds with the Kacharis, by whom he was finally defeated and killed. The remains of considerable earthworks, which are said to have surrounded the capital of Jangal Balahu, are to be seen even at the present day near Raha, a railway station in the District of Nowgong. Several places such as Raha, Jagi and Kajali mukh, situated on the Kalang river, are said to derive their names from incidents in his flight ^{when} ~~being~~ pursued by the Kacharis.² According to Mr. Fisher the Kacharis of North Cachar believe that they once ruled in Kamrupa, and their royal family traced its descent from Rajas of that country, of the line of Ha-tsung-tsa.³

But whatever that might be, the Kachari or Bodo race, it is evident, is a very widely distributed one and exercised their sovereignty throughout Assam in different ages, with different names and in different places. They are undoubtedly found well outside the limits of the modern Assam, i.e. in the districts of North-East Bengal - Jalpaiguri, Coochbehar, Rangpur, Mymensingh and also in Hill Tipperah, where the language of the people gives decisive evidence that they are of the Bodo stock. Dr. S.K. Bhuyan is of the opinion that a strain of Kachari blood may be traced in ^{classes} ~~quarters~~ which have passed off as pure "Aryan". According to him, "the Kingdom of Cachar, of which

-
1. B.C. Allen, A.D.G., p. 20.
 2. Ibid. pp. 20-21.
 3. Gait, A History of Assam, p. 248.

Tāmrādhwaj Narāyan was the ruler in the reign of Svargadeo Rudra Singha, and Govinda Chandra at the time of British occupation, is only one of the numerous states brought to existence by the political genius of the Kachari people. But, because the name 'Cachar' was attached to the specific kingdom of that name, after which the district is called at the present time, the superficial observer is led to suppose that the habitat of the Kacharis is Cachar, and that it is only in Cachar that the Kacharis experimented in the arduous task of state-building; whereas in fact the Kacharis are scattered all over the Brahmaputra valley in addition to the so called district of Cachar, and even beyond their limits."¹

~~Apart from the outlying members of the race, there are within the limits of Assam itself a good number of the Bodo population who belong to the Kachari race. In addition to the Kacharis proper, Mr. S. Endle has classed the following tribes of Assam within the fold of the great Bodo race, - such as Rābhā, Moch, Dhimal, Koch, Solanimiyas, Dimāsā, Hojāis, Lāhings, Gāros and Hājongs. "To these", says Mr. Endle, "may be added one or two smaller communities e.g., the Morāns and the Chutiās in Upper Assam, whose language, not altogether extinct as yet though apparently dying out rapidly, would seem to prove them to be closely akin to the Kachari (Bodo) race."~~²

Although previous to the establishment of the Kachari Raj at Dimāpur on the riverSubansiri, a great portion of their history is, to a certain extent, wrapped in oblivion, it is very certain that the race was ruling for many years throughout Assam. This fact is established not only by the large

-
1. Kachari Buranji, Introduction, ^{pp.} 13-14.
 2. S. Endle, The Kacharis, pp. 4-5.

number of the people now found, but by the traces of their domination having been left in the nomenclature of some of the physical features of the country, especially in the names of all, or nearly all, the principal rivers: thus, Dibru signifies in Kachari, the river of rapids (di - water, bru - bubbling, broken): Disāi means the small river, and the word di, a Kachari synonym for water, is traceable in the names of numberless other rivers and streams throughout the Assam valley, such as Dihing, Dijoi, Disāng, Diputā, Kikrāng, Diyu, Dihong, Dibong, Dimu, Diku, Diphu and Digāru etc. Dimāpur signifies "the town on the big or head water," i.e. river town, ^{and} was doubtless so named by the Kacharis on the Raj being established then.¹

At the time of Kachari migration from Gauhati to Upper Assam, a large number of Kacharis were being absorbed in the ruling race in Central Assam by inter-marriage, while others retired to the surrounding hills. The latter gradually changed their customs and language either from contact with the other inhabitants or from their intercourse with the Koch race before leaving the plains, and developed into a separate and distinct tribe called Gāros. The similarity in the construction of many words in Gāro would lead to the supposition that the two languages were nearly allied at some remote period. During this migration, however, in addition to the large numbers of the race left in Central Assam, further bodies were left in Tezpur (Darrang), Nowgong, and other places through which the exodus took place. Some of these people still speak the language known as Kachari, though in slightly different form from the pure dialect in use in the North Cachar Hills, and are known as

1. C.A. Soppitt, A Historical and Descriptive Account of Kacharis, Shillong, 1885, p.3.

Lālung, Meoh and Hājong. The large number of Kacharis who were transformed into the ruling race in the Assam valley tendered their submission to the Koch, during their sway in Western Assam and subsequently to the Ahoms; and though many, by combining and forming large communities, retained their language to a great extent in its original form (Bodo), many again lost all, or nearly all, trace of their nationality from contact with the ruling races, and have probably contributed largely to the Koch caste of Hindus throughout the valley of the Brahmaputra. After the removal of the Kachari Raj from Dimāpur to Māibong, we hear of fights between the Kacharis in Nowgong and Darrang and the Ahoms. As regards Darrang, it is known that considerable bodies of Kacharis settled in the district, their descendants being there to this day, and it is probable that before re-submitting to the Ahoms, after the departure of the Koch, several engagements took place. They were defeated, however, and shortly after helped the Ahoms against the Muhammadans.¹

The Kachari Buranji gives two accounts of the early Kacharis - the first one of the Kacharis of Sadiā, which evidently is the history of the Chutia tribes, and the second one is of the Hedāmbā Kacharis, which can be discussed with profit in our present chapter.

Early Kachari Kings.

King Sasemphā, a successor of the epic hero Bhim, was the ruler of Hedāmba country. In course of time, one of his descendants, Birhās by name, became very powerful among the Kacharis. He was succeeded by his son-in-law Bishārpātiphā by name. He added many provinces to his principalities by a series of conquests.² After this king, his son Bikramadityaphā became the

1. C.A. Soppitt. A Historical and Descriptive Account of the Kacharis Tribe. Shillong, 1885, p.2.

2. History of Assam, Dr. Peter Wade, p.61.

An Account of Assam,
ed. B. Sarma, Shillong, 1927.

king of the Kacharis. He is said to have annexed^{to} his kingdom, the adjacent territory Nāmsāng and Barhāt. He ruled for a long period and is said to have founded a city named Sonāpur by erecting golden statues and temples. The city Sonāpur is still in existence. He is said to have built another city named Bānpur, also still in existence, by erecting golden statue of the God Bānesvar (i.e. Siva) and temples. He dug many ponds there. At last he made Mahāmaniphā, the king of that place and left to found a new capital. He fought with the Nagās and the Morāns, and occupied their territory. There he founded a new capital named Lakshmindrapur and passed the last days of his life.¹

At the death of Vikramādityapha, Mahāmaniphā ascended to the Kachari throne. After some time, he made Māniphā, his successor, the King of the Kachari kingdom and went to Pātahadambak and founded a new capital there. Māniphā was succeeded by Lādpha after whom Khorāphā became the Kachari king. During the rule of the last three rulers, the centre of Kachari government had shifted between Lakshmindrapur and Patahadambak. It is mentioned in the Kachari Buranji that Khorāphā or Khunkara was the Kachari king at the end of the fifteenth and in the beginning of the sixteenth century.²

According to Sir Edward Gait, the Kachari kingdom in the thirteenth century extended along the south bank of the Brahmaputra, from the Dikhu to the Kalang, or beyond, and included also the valley of the Dhansiri and the tract which now forms the north Cachar subdivision. At that time, the

-
1. Kachari Buranji, pp. 3-10.
 2. Kachari Buranji, p. 11.

country further west, though largely inhabited by Kacharis, appears to have formed part of the Hindu kingdom of Kāmatā. Towards the end of this century, the outlying Kachari settlements east of the Dikhu river withdrew before the Ahoms. For the whole fourteenth century, the Dikhu river appears to have formed the boundary between the Kacharis and the Ahoms.¹

Struggle with the Ahoms.

Sources available to J.P. Wade, which we have not been able to trace, state that Supimphā (1493-97), the Ahom King, defeated the Kacharis and seized a part of their country and erected fortifications at Namsāng.² The next encounter between the Kacharis and the Ahoms took place in Dea, 1526, when the Ahom king Suhungmung marched against the Kacharis, and ascended the Dhansiri to Barduār. In this battle, although the Kacharis defended themselves valiantly with bows and arrows, and were victorious at first, they were at last overpowered and forced to retreat with heavy loss. Then the Kacharis were pushed back to Nāmdāng and the Ahoms captured Dargaon.³

In 1531, the Ahoms again erected a fort at Marangi. This gave offence to Khunkhara or Khorāphā, the Kachari king, and he sent his brother Detchā or Neochā to drive them out. A battle was fought, in which the Kacharis were routed and their commander was killed. Then the Ahoms pursued the Kacharis as far as their capital at Dimāpur, on the left bank of the Dhansiri. The Kachari king fled from the capital, when a prince named Detsung or Degsongphā became the Kachari king.⁴

1. Gait. *Assam History*, pp. 248-249.

2. Dr. J.P. Wade. *An Account of Assam*, p. 62.

3. D.A.B., pp. 19-20. & *S. Sankar*, 1927. K. B. P. 9.

4. Ibid. pp. 24-26.

The Kachari Buranjī mentions these wars very briefly, but is quite consistent with the Ahom source.

Dersongphā or Detsung, 1531-36.

In 1536, Dersongphā quarrelled with the Ahoms, who again ascended the Dhansiri and sacked Dimāpur, the capital. Dersongpha fled, but was followed, captured and put to death. After this invasion by the Ahoms, the Kacharis deserted Dimāpur and the valley of Dhansiri, and, retreating further south, established a new capital at Maibong.¹ In this war the Kacharis as well as the Ahoms were reported to have used cannon.²

Nirbhoynārāyan.

After Dersongphā, his son Madan Kōwarⁿ by a daughter of a chief of Gaur, succeeded to the Kachari throne. On his accession Madan took a new name as Nirbhoynārāyan. He was given an Ahom princess in marriage. It is said that this Kachari king promised an annual tribute to the Ahoms. The Kachari Rajas were thenceforward called "thāpita-Sanehita" (established and preserved) by the Ahoms, a term which implied some degree of subordination. Nirbhoy-narayan made his capital at Lakhindra-pur.³

Dullabhnārāyan and Meghnārāyan.

Nirbhoynārāyan was succeeded by Dullabhnārāyan and then again by Meghnārāyan. During the rule of these rulers, there was peace and order in the Kachari kingdom.⁴

Yasanārāyan^c 1583 (regal year) ? 1610. (regal year Gait).

Meghnārāyan was succeeded by Yasanārāyan. A silver coin discovered by

1. Deodhai Asam Buranji, pp. 33-35.

2. Gait's History, p. 96. Gait gives no reference for this interesting statement which we cannot trace in any of the sources available to us.

3. Kachari Buranji, pp. 19-20.

4. Ibid. p. 20.

~~few years ago~~, in the possession of an inhabitant of Kāsipur, in the neighbourhood of Māibong, bears a date equivalent to 1583 and was issued by Yasanārāyan Deb, "a worshipper of Hara Gauri, Siva and Durgā of the line of Hāchengsā."¹

Sir Edward Gait in his History of Assam mentions Satrudaman alias Pratāpnarāyan as the success^{or} of Yasanārāyan of the discovered silver coin. But it is mentioned in the Kachari Buranji that Yasanārāyan assumed the title of Pratāpnārāyan after defeating the Ahom army led by Soudar Gohain in 1606,² and therefore the two appear to be identical.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Kacharis held the greater part of the Nowgong district and the North Cachar Hills and gradually extended their sway over the plains of Cachar. The previous history of the last mentioned tract of territory is wrapped in oblivion, but there is a tradition that it was formerly included in the Tippera Kingdom, and was presented by a king of that country to a Kachari Raja who had married his daughter early in the seventeenth century.³

Invasion of Ja^{ya}ntia by the Kacharis

By this time, the Ja^{ya}ntia king Dhan Mānik seized Prabhakar, the chief of Dimaruā, whose family had formerly been vassals of the Kacharis. He appealed to the Kachari Raja, who demanded his release and, meeting with a refusal, invaded Dhanmanik's kingdom, routed his army, and compelled him to sue for

-
1. Gait. R.P.H.R.A. H. A., pp. 251-52.
 2. Kachari Buranji, pp. 24-25.
 3. Gait, History of Assam, p. 252.

peace. He subsequently acknowledged himself a tributary of the Kachari monarch by giving him two Jayantia princesses in marriage. The Jayantia king also made over his nephew and heir-apparent Yasamanik as a hostage. The latter was kept a prisoner at Brahmapur, which was afterwards renamed Khaspur. To commemorate his victory, the Kachari king assumed the title 'Asimardan'.¹

War with the Ahoms.

Soon afterwards Dhanmanik died. Yasanārāyan thereupon released Yasamanik from captivity and made him king of Jayantia, but he appears to have insisted on being recognized as his overlord. Yasamanik resented this, but, being unable by himself to offer any effectual resistance to the Kacharis, he endeavoured to embroil them with the Ahom king, Pratāp Singh. Yasamanik offered a princess to the Ahom monarch on condition that she would be escorted to the latter's capital through the Kachari territory. This proposal was vehemently opposed by the Kachari Raja Yasanārāyan who did not see any necessity for deviating from the customary route between Assam and Jayantia, which lay through the territory of the ^{a petty chief referred to as} Gobhā Raja. The refusal of the Kachari king to permit the girl to be taken through his dominion led, as Yasamanik had hoped, to a war with the Ahoms. In 1606, the Ahom king Pratāp Singha despatched Soudar Gohain at the head of a powerful army, which succeeded in capturing several Kachari garrisons. The Gohain then proposed to attack Maibong, the Kachari capital. There arose in Cachar a great

1. Gait, A History of Assam, pp. 252 and 262.
Kachari Buranji, p. 21.

leader in the person of prince Bhimbal Kowaxⁿ. The Kacharis under the leadership of this powerful prince subsequently surprised and destroyed the Ahom garrison at Rahā by killing Soudar Gohāin on the battlefield. The Kachari Raja now assumed the title of Prātapnārāyan and changed the name of his capital Maibong into Kirtipur. With this terminated the vassalage of the Kacharis. Yasanārāyan stopped payment of the tribute and behaved as an independent sovereign.¹ At this period the Kacharis were in possession of the portion of the Nowgong district which lies to the South of Rahā.²

As we close our study in the year 1603, our discussion of the Kachari history may stop at the end of Yasanarayan's reign.

The following is a list of the subsequent Kachari kings:

Nara Narayan		
Bhimbal Narayan		
Indra Vallabh	1637-	
Birdarpa Narayan	-1681	
Garud dhraj	1681-1695	
Makaradhraj	1695	(accession)
Udayāditya		
Tāmradhraj	-1708	(death)
Suradarpa	1708	(accession)
Haris Chandra Narayan	1721	(reigning)
Kirti Chandra Narayan	1736	(reigning)
Sandhi Kāri	1765	(reigning)
Haris Chandra Narayan		
(Bhupati)	1771	(reigning)
Krishna Chandra	1771-1813	(death)
Gorinda Chandra	1813-1830	

-
1. Kachari Buranji, pp. 21-25.
 2. Gait, History of Assam, p. 253.

The Kingdom of Jayantia

The Kingdom of Jayantia was an independent state up to 1826, when it was annexed to the adjacent British territory.¹ It included the Jayantia hills and a plain tract adjacent to the south of these hills stretching as far as the Barāk river in the Sylhet district. The former was the original abode of the Jayantia rulers and the latter was a subsequent annexation. But it was that plain tract which was first known as the Kingdom of Jayantia, and was mentioned in the Panrānik and Tāntrik literature as reputed for its sacred shrine of Jayanti Devi in the Fāljur Parganā.

There is a tradition that in early times, Jayantia was under the domination of a dynasty of Brahmanical rulers. It is mentioned in the Mahabhārata that at the time of Rāj'suya sacrifice of King Yudhisthira, Indra Sen Rāi was the Brahman ruler of this kingdom and for his pride and arrogance, he is said to have been humiliated by the second Pāndava Bhima. For the subsequent several centuries there are no materials with which a reasonable and scientific history of this kingdom can be written. In this connection, Mr. S.K. Dutta, Director of Historical Studies in Assam, says that "like so many Hindu Kingdoms of the distant past, it was blotted out of existence by some hill chief who swooped down with his followers and established themselves there."² This kingdom was mentioned as Nārirājya in Jaimini's Mahābhārata. In ^{the} medieval period, it was also considered as a ^{of Bengal,} matrarchal kingdom.³

-
1. Mackenzie, The North-East Frontier, ^{of Bengal,} pp. 4-5, 1884, Calcutta, of Bengal.
 2. S.K. Dutta, Introduction to Jayantia Buranji.
 3. J.A.S.B. Review of History of Assam of Gupt, Vol. III. by P.N. Bhaia Charyya, 1927, p. 848.

The Khāsi and Jayantia hills are now inhabited by the Khasis and Syntengs, who are said to be the remnant of the first Mongolian overflow into India, who established themselves in their present habitat at a very remote period and who owing to their isolated position, maintained their independence, while their congeners in the plains below were submerged in subsequent streams of immigration from the same direction. Linguistic evidence points to the conclusion that some form of Mon-Khmer speech was once the language of the whole of further India. These speakers of this speech were not the autochthones of this region, but immigrated from North-West China, and disposed the aborigines of that place.¹

It has been observed that this vigorous and sturdy race have preserved their ancestral institutions and other distinctions through many centuries in the face of the attractions offered by the alien forms of culture around them. In the first place, their social organisation presents one of the most perfect examples still surviving of matriarchy,^{any} institution which governs every aspect of Khasi family-life. Among them property descends through the female. The head of a Khāsi community is succeeded not by his own but by his sister's son. The male members are considered as nobody in the law of inheritance.² The next characteristic of the Khasis which marks them out for special notice is their method of divination for ascertaining the causes of misfortune and the remedies to be applied. The other remarkable feature of the Khasi usage is the custom which prevails to this day, of setting up of great memorials of rough stone, in the shape of monoliths, erected in memory of their dead.

-
1. Grierson, Linguistic Survey of India, Calcutta, 1904, Vol. II, p. 1.
 2. P.R.T. Gurdon, The Khasis, London, 1914, p. 82.

Similar monoliths are found amongst the Hos and Mundās, in Chota Nagpur, Central India, who are also the speakers of Mon-Khmer speech.¹

From the existing sources, it is impossible to write the early history of this kingdom. Similar to other tribes of ancient India, the tendency of the Khasis and Syntengs was also to split up into numerous petty principalities each under its own chief. Sometimes ~~some~~^{an} ambitious leader ~~was~~ found to win and annex certain of the adjacent territories, and the kingdom thus formed would continue to exist until the weakness of his successors gave an opportunity for the prevailing disintegrating tendency to assert itself, when it would again dissolve into a number of small independent communities.² We cannot ascertain if or when the adjacent states of Khasis, Jayantias, Syntengs and Khyram were under the allegiance of a single powerful sovereign. Neither historical records nor the scanty references in the annals of the other kings help us to write the ancient history of this portion of Indian territory in the real sense of the term.

The first reference to this tract in the records of other states is found in the Vamsāvat of the Koch Kings at about the middle of the sixteenth century. At that time, the two most prominent chiefs seem to have been the Rajas of Jayantia and Khyram respectively. The name of the former king is not mentioned. Gait says that it may be either Bargohain or Bijoymanik, to whom he has assigned the periods from 1548-64 and 1564-80 respectively. But we cannot agree here with Gait. We have already shown in our study of the

1. P.R.T. Gurdon, The Khasis, pp. 144-45.

2. Gait, The History of Assam, p. 260.

Koches that the invasions of the north-eastern frontier by the Koch King Nara Narayan were taking place between 1547 to 1562. So according to Gait these occurred in the reign of Bar Gohain. But Gait has already made it clear that he assumed all these dates by counting back from the reign of Dhanmārik who ruled at the end of the sixteenth century, and who is known to have been contemporary to the Kachari King Tasha Narayan, who issued dated communications. But the full history of the reign of Bar Gohain is given in the Jayantia Buranji,¹ in which we do not find any mention of the Koch invasion. We also do not know whether or not Gait was in possession of this chronicle, but in any case we must place the reign of Bar Gohain in an earlier period, in view of this serious discrepancy.

Whatever might be the name of the King, it is mentioned in the Vamsāvali that the Raja of Jayantia was defeated and slain by Nara Narayan's brother Chilarai; and his son, after acknowledging himself a tributary, and promising to pay regular tribute, was set up in his place. It is further mentioned that the vassal Jayantia prince was not allowed to strike coins in his own name but in the name of his kingdom only.² Gait has confirmed the above fact when he remarked that "this story may perhaps explain why so few Jaintia coins bear the name of the King in whose reign they were struck, but are simply described as coins of the most illustrious ruler of Jaintiapur."³

The Khyram King Viryyavanta (Gunilanta⁴), whose capital was at Nong Kram,

-
1. S.K. Bhuyan, J.B., 1937, Ganhati, pp. 4-10.
 2. D.B.V., pp. 81-82.
 3. J.A.S.B. 1895, pp. 242-43.
 4. This is the form given by Gait. The Vams published version of the Vamsavali edited by H.C. Gossain, gives Gunilanta which appears to be an adjective meaning "noble".

not far from Shillong, seeing the fate of the neighbouring Jaintia King, made his submission voluntarily and undertook to pay an annual tribute of a considerable amount.¹ It is mentioned in the Rājmaṭā, or chronicles of the Kings of Tippera, that about the same time as that of the Koch invasion of Jayentia, the Tippera King Braja Manik also invaded that kingdom. But the above statement is refuted by Gait who considers it too vague to deserve credence.²

It is mentioned in the Buranji that the last of the four Brahmanical rulers of Jayentia were Kedaresvar Rai, Dhanesvar Rai, Kandarpa Rai and Jayanta Rai. Regarding the first three kings the Buranjist did not say anything, but of Jayanta Rai it is said that he had no male issue. At last, in his old age, he got a female child, whom he named Jayanti Devi, according to the name of his favourite goddess Gauri. Jayanti Devi was married to Lantabar, the royal priest. At the death of her father, Jayanti succeeded to the throne and assumed the title "Rani Simha".³ After sometime Lantabar was exiled for his profligacy and remarried one Matsyodari, who gave birth to a son named Bar Gohain. From the very childhood, Bar Gohain was found to be noble and brave. In his early age he is said to have fought and defeated Muhammad Sultan, the Muslim chief of neighbouring Sultanpur and

1. D.R.V. pp. 84-85.

2. Gait, A History of Assam, p. 262.

3. The accession of a ruling queen deserves notice, since queens ruling in their own right are almost unheard of in Hindu India. It is clear that the matriarchal traditions of the Jaintias, though evidently overlaid by Hindu law, made this possible. Many impossible tales are told of her by tradition, where she has almost the status of a goddess.

occupied it. Next Bar Gohain attacked the kingdom of Rani Simha but was defeated ~~at~~^{at} the hands of Bhim, the general of Jayanti Devi. Having learnt Bar Gohain to be the son of Lantabar and Matsyodari, Jayanti Devi took him as her nephew (sister's son) and made him the heir-apparent. On the death of Jayanti Devi, Bar Gohain ascended the throne of Jayantia. He is said to have been succeeded by the following rulers: Bijoymanik, Parbatrai, Dharmanik, Yasamanik, Sundar Rai, Yasamat rai, Rani Simha, Lakshmi Simha, Pratap Singha, Ram Singha and Saru Konwr. The above name 'Rani Simha' ~~inside the list~~ testifies that the list is not in chronological order.¹

The above name 'Parbat rai' (the Lord of the Hills) convinced Gait that it was he who extended the sway of the Jayantia Kings into the plain tract at the foot of his ancestral kingdom in the hills.² But ~~this~~^{this} seems improbable for there is another Janitia King named Choto Parbat Rai' who ruled from 1636-1647, of whom nothing like that is recorded in the chronicles. It seems unlikely that these names should have any special significance.

In the reign of the Jaintia King, Dhan Manik, some Kachari merchants used to send rice and other commodities for sale to Syrat (Sylhet) in the dominion of the Jaintia King, through Mulagub. The traders from Bengal used to purchase them from there. The people of the Jayantia King demanded customs from them on account of the use of their market-place. Once some of the commodities of the Kachari merchants were seized by some of the people of the Jayantia King. At that time the Kachari King was Yasa Narayan, who

1. Jayantia Buranji, pp.1-10.

2. Gait, A History of Assam, p. 261.

reigned at the end of the sixteenth century, ^{as is} confirmed by a silver coin, which bears a date equivalent to 1583, and was issued by Yasa Narayan Deva, "a worshipper of Hara Gauri, Siva and Durgā, of the line of Hachengsa".¹ The Kachari King marched against and defeated the Jayantias and fixed Mulagul as the boundary between the two kingdoms. After some time, the Kacharis treacherously murdered a number of Jayantias whom they invited in a feast on the bank of the river Kapili. Next a Muslim chief named Jamal Khan invaded the country of the Kacharis after crossing the river Barak, and erected a fort at Khaspur, in the territory of the Jayantia king. This time there arose among the Kacharis a very powerful warrior in the person of a prince named Bhimbal, who attacked and defeated the Muslims and on the way back captured Dhanmanik, the King of Jayantia. Subsequently a treaty was concluded in which Dhanmanik gave his daughter Sandyavati by name and his nephew Yasamanik as hostages to the Kachari king. On the death of Dhanmanik, Jasamanik was released and succeeded to the throne of Jayantia in 1605.² We close our thesis in the year 1603, when Pratap Singh came to the Ahom throne. Therefore our present study of the history of the Jaintias may stop at the beginning of the reign of Yasamanik, who ruled from 1605-1625. The following is a list of the subsequent kings.

Sundar Rai	1625-1636
Choto Parbat Rai	1636-1647
Gasamanta Rai	1647-1660
Vana Simha	1660-1669
Pratap Simha	1669
Lakshmi Narayan	1669-1697
Ram Simha	1697-1708
Jaya Narayan	1708-1729
Bara Gohain II	1729-1770
Chatra Simha	1770-1781
Jatra Narayan	1781-1786
Vijoy Narayan	1786-1789
Ram Simha II	1789-1832
Rajendra Simha	1832-1835.

1. Botham, J.A.S.B., 1912, Vol. VIII, p. 556.

2. Jayantia Buranji, pp. 10-13, 1937, Gauhati, Edition, S.K. Bhuyan.

CHAPTER IX.THE CHUTIAS.

The Chutias are the indigenous people of Assam. The majority of them now occupy the present districts of Lakhimpur and Sibsagar. Their original language which was known to the Deoris, was definitely Bodo, but their physical features indicate the infusion of Shan blood among them. This can be explained by pointing out that they are the next neighbours of the Shans of South-East Asia. Some of them are also found at present at Darrang and Duars area.

According to the Assamese chronicles, the Chutia country was situated to the west of the Udaigiri mountains (Brahmakunda and the ranges bounding Khampti on the west), the hills on the south were inhabited by the Kacharis and the Nagas, to the west it extended as far as the country of the Kushans, a Hindu tribe dwelling in the neighbourhood of Bisnath (perhaps the kingdom of Kamrup), and on the north the area stretched up to the hills of the Amut Miri (perhaps the ranges of the Himalayas, bordering north-eastern Assam). There were originally three races inhabiting the country, the Borahis, the Morans and the Chutias, of whom the last one was the ruling tribe. According to the Mau chronicles, it was upon this people that the invasions of the Shans took place early in the 13th and 14th centuries.¹

Dalton contends that the original seat of the Chutias was somewhere near the sources or bordering the hill course of the Subansiri. They are described as having occupied, like the Abors and the Miris of the present time, large villages on lofty mountains, having no dependence on each other and acknowledging no leadership of any powerful authority.² Endle says that

¹Assamese Manuscript, incorporated in H.S. N.Elias, Calcutta, 1876, p. 61.

²Dalton, Sketch of the History of the Chutia kings, incorporated in An Outline grammar of the Deori-Chutia language, W.B.Brown, Shillong, 1895, p.77.

there were two immigrations from the north and the north-west into the rich valley of the Brahmaputra; the first, entering north-eastern Bengal and western Assam through the valley of the Tista, Dharla and Sankosh, founded what was formerly the kingdom of Kamrup; the second, making its way through the Subansiri, Dibong and Dihong valleys into Assam, were called the Chutias and held sway for a long period.¹

It is mentioned in the Assamese chronicles that Asambhinna, the first Chutia king, dwelt on the banks of the Brahmaputra with his seven brothers. In his reign, a Brahman came from Banaras and converted the whole of the eight brothers to the Brahmanism. The Brahman was renowned for his learning and piety and for these qualities he succeeded in marrying the daughter of Asambhinna. The seven brothers were not unanimous at the death of Asambhinna on the question of succession to the throne. Eventually all of them agreed to place the Brahman on the throne. The Brahman in turn was succeeded by one of the descendants of Asambhinna called Indradev Raja, who ruled for 30 years. This king was succeeded by 31 kings in regular succession, the last of whom was called Lekroy Raja. This king had four sons, Burora, Maisura, Kolita and Kossi Raja. On the death of Lekroy Raja, before the succession took place, Sam-lung-pha, the Mau king, invaded the country. Burora was killed on the battlefield, Maisura fled with a number of followers to Maing Bing (near present Bisnath); Kolita fled westward with a considerable force and established a kingdom on the bank of the Brahmaputra. Kossi Raja was captured and ultimately placed on the throne on condition of tribute.

¹Endle S. The Kacharis, London, 1911, p.4.

Sam-lung-pha then appointed a Tamon (Governor) ~~over~~ the vassal kingdom and returned to Mogaung. After 5 months, the Tamon was poisoned, ~~to death~~ when Kossi Raja became independent. Early in the 13th century, when Sukapha invaded Assam, Kossi Raja was the ruling king.¹

The chronicle mentions 32 reigns from Indradev downward over an aggregate of 554 years.* The length of the reigns of Asambhinna and the Brahman are not mentioned. Supposing them to be the average, the accession of Asambhinna can be placed roughly in middle of the 7th century, A.D.

In the extreme north-eastern frontier of Assam, there are many archaeological ruins, ascribed to Bhismaka and Sisupala. The history of Bhismaka and his daughter, Rukmini, is mentioned in the Bhagavat and the Vishnu Purana. It is stated that this kingdom was known as Vidarbha and its capital was at Kundil, on the bank of the river of the same name. Sankar Dev's 'Rukmini Haran' also narrates this history. ~~In spite of Sisupala's~~ ^{against Sisupala's opposition} The story of Rukmini's marriage with Krishna is known to all. Choudhury suggests that there was actually a prince, Bhismaka by name, in this corner of the province in remote past.²

According to the Chutia Buranji, the founder of the Chutia kingdom was Birbar or Birpal, who claimed descent from Bhismaka and reigned in A.D. 1189. The same source gives a list of 10 kings, the last of whom was killed in 1523.³ So we can estimate the dates of these kings roughly ^{by} allowing about 35 years to each. The dates of the Chutia kings mentioned in the Chutia and

¹ Assamese Manuscript, H.S. pp. 61-62.

² H.C.P.A. pp. 197-98.

³ ~~See~~ See p. 227.

Deodhai Buranji are not correct. So we have arranged the chronology on the basis of the Ahom Buranji, the dates of which ^{seem more reliable on the basis} ~~are proved correct.~~ ^{of the available synchronisms.} *
Birpal (1189-1224).

Birpal had his capital on a hill called Svar^angiri. He assumed the title Gayapal. The surname 'Pal' seems to be an imitation of the Kamrup kings of the dynasty of Brahmapal. Birpal must have been identical with Kossi Raja of the other account, ^{it was he who} and encountered the followers of Sukapha. His wife was Rupavati, who gave birth to a son named Gauri Narayan, who succeeded his father in ~~f~~ c. 1224.¹

Gauri Narayan (1224-1259).

Gauri Narayan was one of the most powerful of the Chutia kings. He brought under his sway the tribes of the neighbouring mountains, Rangalgiri, Kalgiri, Nilgiri, Dhavalgiri, and Chadr^agiri.² After conquering the whole north-eastern hilly areas of Assam, he assumed the proud title, 'Lord of the Hills'.³ At the head of a large army, he descended into the valley of the Brahmaputra, ^{and} attacked and defeated a king named Bhadra Sen, who ruled on the Svetgiri mountain. In this campaign he received rich booty and many prisoners of war of the Brahman, Tanti, Sonari, Sutar and Kumar castes. He placed Bhadra Sen's son on the throne as the vassal king and built his capital at Ratnapur whence he was called Ratnadhvaj Pal.⁴

Gauri Narayan then ~~made arrangements~~ to ~~attack~~ a neighbouring king named Nyayapal. This king being aware of the growing power and influence of

¹C.B., ~~ER~~ P.H.R.A. pp. 19-20.

² Ibid.

³ Outline grammar of Deori- Chutia Language, p.78.

⁴ C.B., R.P.H.R.A. pp. 19-20.

* See p. 27.

the Chutias, sent immediately the terms of surrender with costly gifts. Ratnadhvaj accepted the proffered alliance, which was cemented by his union with one of the daughters of Nyayapal. Next he directed his attention to the consolidation of the conquered territory. He~~x~~ built a line of forts, along the foot of the hills, probably to restrain the inroads of the bordering hill tribes. He dug large tanks and built many temples.¹

For one of his sons named Vijayadhvaj ~~Pal~~, when of age, Ratnadhvaj sent an embassy to the Kamatesvar, evidently Sandhya, ~~he~~ demanding a princess of that family in marriage. The Kamata king refused to agree to the request. Ratnadhvaj then marched with a large army towards Kamat^a, ~~by~~ constructing a road with forts at certain intervals. The Kamatesvar, ~~became~~ astonished at the energy of these measures and the rapidity of their execution, made peace without resistance and gave one of his daughters in marriage to the Chutia prince.²

The ruler of Gaur made friendship with with Ratnadhvaj, who sent one of his sons to that country for education. As a token of friendly relations both the rulers exchanged water from ~~The~~ Parasuramkundu and the Ganges for religious purposes. This suggests that the ruler of Gaur must have been a Hindu by religion. Evidently this ruler was either Visvarup Sen or Kesav Sen, the successors of Lashman Sen, who ruled at least up to 1260.³ Unfortunately the Chutia prince died there and the corpse was sent to Ratnadhvaj, while engaged in building a new city, which was accordingly named 'Sadiya' (Sa- a dead body; diya- given or cremated).⁴

¹An Outline grammar of Deori-Chutia Language, pp. 78-79.

²Ibid.

³H.B. Vol. 1. pp. 226-27 & 254-55.

⁴Brown W.B. An Outline grammar of the Deori-Chutia Language, p. 78.

Ratnadhvaj was succeeded by his son, Vijayadhvaj Pal (1259-94), of whom and six successive kings, Vikramadhvaj (1294-1329), Garuradhvaj (1329-64), Sankhadhvaj (1364-99), Mayuradhvaj (1399-1434), Jayadhvaj (1434-69), and Karmadhvaj (1469-1504), the Chutia chronicles record nothing.¹ It is mentioned in the Assam Buranji that during the reign of Sutupha, the Ahom king, (1364-76), there were frequent disputes between the Chutias and the Ahoms. In 1376, the Chutia king, evidently Sankh^Adhvaj Pal, met Sutupha at Chapaguri on the Safrai river and murdered him treacherously.² The same source mentions that Tyaokhanti (1380-89), the successor of Sutupha, led an expedition against the Chutias to avenge the murder of the Ahom king. The Chutia king is to have escaped to the hills.³

Dhir Narayan (1504-23).

In the beginning of the 16th century, Dhir Narayan was the ruling Chutia king. He was very powerful. He had a son named Sadhak Narayan and a daughter, Sadhani. The king married his daughter to a Chutia chief named Nitipal, who was a good warrior and ^{who was} appointed Yuvaraj.⁴

In 1513, Dhir Narayan invaded the Ahom country with an army and a flotilla of boats. His land forces were defeated at Dikhaumukh by the Ahoms, who were also victorious in a naval encounter at Sirati. The Chutias lost heavily in both the engagements and were compelled to retreat, when Suhungmung, the Ahom king, took possession of Mungkhlang and Namdang. Dhir Narayan then made friendship with the king of Mungkang ^{in order} to encounter the Ahoms. It is

¹C.B., R.P.H.R.A. pp. 19-20.

²Barua H.K., A.B. p.15.

³A.H.B. p. 49.

⁴C.B., R.P.H.R.A. pp. 19-20.

stated in the Shan chronicles that the King Chau-ka-pha (1493-1517), accepted the invitation of the Chutia king and sent a big army to undertake the conquest of Assam. The combined Chutia and ~~the~~ Nara troops overpowered the Ahom garrisons posted on the border. It is mentioned in the same chronicle that the Ahoms made peace with the Naras by sending large presents of cattle and horses to the king of Mungkang.¹

In 1520, the Chutias again attacked the Ahom fort at Mungkhlang. The Ahom commander in charge of the fort was killed in the battle and the whole garrison was utterly routed by the Chutias. As a result an extensive tract of Ahom territory up to Mungkhlang fell in^{to} the hands of the Chutias. In 1522, the Ahoms engaged themselves in another encounter with the Chutias near the mouth of the Sessa river and recovered the territory up to the Tiphao river from the possession of the Chutias and erected a fort there.²

In 1523, the Chutias laid siege to the Ahom fort on the bank of the Tiphao river, but met with a stubborn resistance. Then they fortified their position bordering the Ahom territory. Next the Ahoms took the offensive and in an encounter defeated the Chutias and forced them to retreat as far as the Kaitara hill. The Chutias then made their stronghold on the Chandangiri hill and checked the Ahom advance by rolling down heavy stones. Ultimately the Chutias were defeated by the Ahom army near Jang~~mun~~khlang (or Mathadang).³ Dhir Narayan and his son-in-law, Nitipal were killed in the open battle, ~~the~~ when the whole Chutia army was routed and many of them found themselves prisoners in the hands of the victors. It is said that the Chutia princess

¹H.S. p.41.

²Barua H.K., A.B. p.15.

³Ibid.

Sadhani, preferring death to captivity, killed herself with a spear.¹ Sadhak Narayan, the son of Dhir Narayan, was taken by the conquerors, ~~when, at last,~~ The Ahom king gave an estate bounded on the north by the Kabirar Ali, on the south by the Brahmaputra river, on the east by the Rota and on the west by the Dhansiri river, ^{to Sadhak Narayan} along with a number of the Chutia families. It is said that the Ahom king issued a copper plate confirming this grant, but it is not in existence now.²

Early in 1527, the Chutias again revolted against the Ahom supremacy. They were soon reduced to submission, but according to a tradition preserved by Gait, not to be found in any of the Buranjis available to us, the Dihingia Gohain lost his life during the disturbance. Similarly in 1542, another Chutia raid is recorded during the reign of Suklenmung.³ It is mentioned in the Ahom Buranji that in 1565, the Chutias pluhdered the Ahom territory at Namrup and Kheram.⁴ In 1572, according to the evidence not available in the Buranjis, there was a Chutia insurrection in the Ahom territory, which was pacified by an Ahom expedition.⁵

¹Barua J.K. C.B. Jorhat, 1926, p.12.

²C.B., R.P.H.R.A., p. 20.

³H.A. p.90.

⁴A.H.B. p. 89.

⁵A.D.G. Lakhimpur, p. 23.

CHAPTER X.

The Nagas

The form Naga is that commonly used in India. In Assam itself these people are generally known as Nagā. These are one of the most numerous hill tribes of Assam. Towards the northern end of the hills dividing Assam and Bengal from Burma and the south of the Brahmaputra valley, the Nagas have their present abode. They occupy the area from the valley of the Dhansiri in the west¹ to the deep inroads into the hills of Patkai on the western border of Burma; towards the north they occupy the whole hilly region bordering upon the Districts of Nowgong, Sibsagar and Lakhimpur, and, to the southerly direction, they are found in the north of the Cachar district and within the boundary of Manipur. The above territory is divided into two; the first being the administered district of Naga hills and the second is a gradually diminishing tract of unadministered territory, touching in the east the high hills dividing upper Assam from upper Burma. From the ethnological point of view, it has been found that the Nagas in separate areas differ from one another in physique, culture and language. In spite of their differences, they have enough in common to unite them in a particular ethnical unit to be distinguished from the other ^{tribes} houses of the same stock.

The Nagas are associated commonly with the Kukis, from whom, however, they are essentially distinct in customs and personal appearance. It is a distinguishing particular to the Naga tribes that they are not a migratory or wandering people, and while the hill Kacharis and Kukis continually change their locations, seldom keeping their villages more than three years in one spot, the Nagas remain fixed for a long time. Again, the Nagas are remarkable as using no weapons but the javelin and dao, a sort of bill

1. E.T. Dalton, Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal, Calcutta, 1872, pp.38-39. (In the third quarter of the Nineteenth century, Dalton described the river Kopili in the Nowgong district, as the western, and the eastern frontier of the Hill Tippera as the southern boundary of the Naga land. Now the area has no doubt been diminished at the cost of the Nagas, making room for the people of the plain.

common to the Burmasⁿ, Shans and most of the hill tribes except the Kharis. In common with the Kukis and Garos, they abstain strictly from milk, butter ^{ghae} ~~glae~~, looking on the use of them with great aversion. The religion of the Nagas is limited to a few superstitious practices.¹

Though ordinarily the term Naga is used as a generic name, the Nagas are actually divided into various classes among themselves. Dalton divides the whole Naga race broadly into two divisions, east and west of Dhansiri river.² But this is not conclusive. The Nagas of the Naga hills district are mainly of four classes: the Semas, the Angamis, the Rengmas and the Lhotas. These are called western Nagas and the territory in their possession extends far beyond the administered district of Naga hills. Thus the Semas inhabit the valleys of the rivers Dayang, Tuza and Tita together with the mountain ranges and plateaux that separate their waters. Hutton considers this class to be the most primitive of all the Naga tribes.³ The Semas are bordered by the Angamis on the south. They occupy the whole region to the north of Manipur. Butler described them "by far the most powerful and most warlike of all the Naga tribes."⁴ The Rengmas are on the west of the Semas, inhabit spurs of the long ridge running north-east from the Nidzakra hill, through the Therugu hill to the Wokha hill, and are bounded on the south by the Angamis and on the north and west by the Lhotas. Some of them are found in the Mikir hills.⁵ The Lhotas occupy a piece of

1. J.A.S.B. 1840, p. 836.

2. E.T. Dalton, Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal, Calcutta, 1872, pp. 38-39.

3. The Sema Nagas, (J.H. Hutton), London, 1921, pp. 3-4.

4. Butler's Account of the Naga tribes, 1873, A. Mackenzie, North-East Frontier of Bengal, Cal., 1884, p. 84.

5. J.P. Mills, The Rengma Nagas, London, 1937, pp. 1-2.

territory roughly covering the drainage area of the middle and lower Dayang and its tributaries, down to the point where it reaches to the plain.¹

By far the most numerous and significant of the sections, are in possession of an unadministered territory populated by the Naga tribes more or less closely related to those within the district. The Kacch Nagas are at the south-west hills of the Naga hill district. The Aos are found to the north of the Semas up to the river Dikhou on the south-east, and roughly occupy a portion of Naga hills, ^{bordered by} the edge of the plain on the north-west, the Konyaks on the north-east and the Semas and the Lhotas on the south-west. Mills says that the Aos in former times, occupied a big slice of present Sema territory and extended at least to the Wokha-Bhandary bridle path in the present Lhota country.² The Konyak Nagas are found at the north-east corner of the Naga hill district between Dikhou and Disai rivers and to the north of the Patkai range. The Changs and the Sangtams occupy the territory adjacent to the Konyaks in the southerly direction. At the extreme east there lived the Yachumis, Tukomis, Naked Rengmas and the Tangkhuls. To the north of the Tang-khuls and east of the Yachumis and Sangtams are the Kalyo-kengyus.³

The tradition of the Nagas point to the fact that they have migrated from the south to the north. But in the case of the Kacch Nagas, there seem to have been an exception. They are said to have migrated from the direction of the Japvo mountain in the north.⁴

The Nagas between the rivers Dhansiri and Dihing, differ from the

-
1. J.P. Mills, The Lhota Nagas, London, 1922, p.1.
 2. J.P. Mills, The Ao Nagas, London, 1926, p.4.
 3. J.H. Hutton, The Angami Nagas, London, 1921, pp5-6.
 4. Ibid. p.6.

Angamis in north Cachar. The Nagas east of the Dayang river, are divided into broad classes under hereditary chiefs, who appear to exercise great influence over their subjects.¹ Haimendorf has observed that the chiefs possess better houses and richer furniture. They have their councils of the adult male members of the ^aaristocratic classes, which decide all quarrels and settle disputes over field boundaries and the like. There is no animosity or opposition between ^{the} aristocrats and the commoners. They choose their wives from their own class, and only the children of such couples can claim their father's office.²

The case is different with the Nagas of the southern region. They have no kind of internal government. The Nagas of the Dayang river, including those of north Cachar, acknowledge no chief among themselves and deride the idea of such a personage among others. They appoint as spokesman ^a of the village some elders who have the reputation of superior wisdom or perhaps more frequently the influence of wealth. They are called "Gaon-Bura" (Leader of the village) and assume some degree of authority through the mutual understanding between themselves and the ordinary villagers. But the authority of the chief is challengeable. Thus, in case of misuse it appears to be resisted and defied. As a matter of fact, the tribe utterly abjures the idea of subjection to any one from among themselves. The post of "Gaon-Bura" ^{is} neither hereditary nor in every case held throughout life. The petty disputes and disagreements about property and social wrongs are

-
1. E.T. Dalton, Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal, Calcutta, 1872, pp 38-39.
 2. C.V.F. Haimendorf, The Naked Nagas, London, 1939, p.11.

settled by a Council of Elders. The litigants voluntarily submit to their arbitration.¹

The Naga ideology of social constitution seems comparable to the Doctrine of "Maha-Sammata" of Buddhism.² The ^{appointment} story of "Gaon-Bura" has much in common with the "Contractual Theory of State" of Plato, which has ⁱⁿ recent centuries been specially connected with the names of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau, in Europe. What we understand by the term "Constituted Sovereignty" in modern society, is absent in the Naga community. But it is surprising to note that this want of law and government, does not lead them to anarchy and confusion, rather their culture is distinguished by their social integrity, communal unity, and indefatigable courage and energy. Among the western Nagas the Aroongs are said to be the most primitive of all. According to Stewart, the Nagas are "the rudest of the aborigines of Hindusthan".³

By nature, the Nagas are honest, peaceful and hospitable. They are very conservative. They are not at all enthusiastic about adopting new ideas or new ways of life. They are vindictive and cruel; but for these

1. R. Stewart, J.A.S.B., 1855, Notes on North Cachar, p. 582.

2. Dighanikaya, Vol. III. pp 92-93.

A.L. Basham, The Wonder that was India, London, 1954, p. 82.

^{the} (Early in Cosmic Cycle mankind lived in a free atmosphere. There was no necessity of food, clothing, property, family, government or law. Then Cosmic decay began. Men lost their primeval glory and feeling for food and shelter came into existence. They entered into agreements among themselves, accepting institutions, property and family. Next there appeared the cases of theft, adultery and other crimes. Hence the people assembled together and decided to appoint one man among them to maintain order in return for a share of the produce of their fields and herds. He was called the "Great Chosen One" (Mahā-Sammata).

3. R. Stewart, J.A.S.B., 1855, Notes on North Cachar, p. 582.

propensities of their nature, they are orderly without law.¹

As to the origin of the Nagas, some are of the opinion that they are the descendants of the Dyaks of Borneo. The latter, in the remote past, found their way through the straits of Tenasserim, southern Burma and Arakan, until they were either stopped by the vast walls of the Himalayas or by the southward trend of Mongolian peoples. The idea was further strengthened by their resemblance in matters of counting, ^{names} ~~names~~ for domestic implements, village architecture, and ^{by the} head-hunting propensities to the Dyaks. Their love for marine shells was considered another point in favour of their bygone habitat near the sea. But this old idea has now been practically abandoned in favour of their Tibeto-Burman origin. According to this they are being considered as an offshoot of the earliest migration from the neighbourhood of the Kiumhung range, ~~as~~ carried out first by the Chins, who located themselves far to the south in the hills between Lushai and the Irrawadi valley.²

Both physical features and other aspects of material culture point to the existence of a Negrite strain among the Nagas. Hutton finds traces of Papuan and Melanesian features among them!³ Though not common among the Semas, Angamis and Lhotas, instances of woolly hair have been noticed among the Aos,⁴ Rengmas,⁵ Phoms, Yanchings of the Konyaks,⁶ in the Kaca Naga country, particularly in North Cachar; the Thados have this strain with prominent jaws.⁷ The frequency of woolly hair in the north indicates that the former inhabitants had a greater infusion of ulotrichous blood. Hutton

-
1. W.C. Smith, The Ao Naga tribe of Assam, London, 1925, p. 8.
 2. L.W. Shakespeare, History of U. Assam, U. Burma and N.E. Frontier, London, 1914, p. 195-7.
 3. C.R.I., 1931, I, I, pp. 443, and H.C.P.A. p. 127.
 4. Introduction to Smith's Ao Naga tribe, XII.
 5. Mills, The Rengma Nagas, pp. 16-17.
 6. Hutton, M.A.S.B., XI, p. 17.
 7. Hutton, Introduction to Shaw's (Note on the Thado Kulis), J.A.S.B., (N.S.) XXIV, pp.4.

notices also prominent jaws and small stature, associated with the Negrito strain, among the Aos, Phoms and other Konyaks.¹

The Naga reverence for ^{the} ficus, indicates, in the opinion of Hutton, a Negroid cult, spread over the Oceanic area; he suspects also a Negroid belief in the practice of hanging combs of bees and wasps in the entrance to the houses of some Nagas, found also in ^{the} Andaman Islands.² The practice of exposure of the dead or the tree burial of the bodies of those who die by an unnatural death among some Nagas, as among the people of Indonesia, the use of a kind of thorn-lined trap for catching fish among the Nagas of the north and Thados, as in Melanesia,³ the belief in a perilous path, which is required to be passed by the spirit of dead ^d, common among the tribes as in the Andamans and the Pacific area, and other material factors and specimens of art are taken to be survivals of the Negrito strain among these remote tribes of Assam.⁴

Long before the Ahom conquest of the Brahmaputra valley took place in the early part of the thirteenth century, the Nagas were in possession of a vast tract over the north-eastern area of Assam from the hills of the north Cachar to Patkai, and maintained their independent status. During the whole period of Ahom rule in Assam, sporadic clashes between the Nagas and the Ahoms appears to have been one of the chief events of history. The Nagas who were particularly connected with these engagements were the residents of the hilly regions south of the present Sibsagar and Lakhimpur districts from the river Dayang to the further sources of Duri Dihing. This area was populated by the Nagas of Imota, Ao and Konyak tribes. Some Burenjis mention tribes of

-
1. Hutton, Man in India, VI, pp. 257.
 2. M.A.S.B., XI, p.64.
 3. Balfour, Man, 1925, p. 21.
 4. H.C.P.A. pp. 128-9.

Nagas by names, but none of these names have any relation to the names used by modern anthropologists. Some do not mention the names of the Naga tribes at all, but only the names of the Naga villages against which expeditions were sent; and again some refer to them merely by the general term "Naga" (pronounced Nogā).¹

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Mackenzie observed the following sections of the Nagas to be the inhabitants of the region between the rivers Dayang and Buri Dihing: The Paniphatias, the Torphatias, the Doyingias, the Hatigurias, the Asringayas, or the Charmgayas, the Dopdarias, the Namsangias, the Tablungias, the Jaktungias, the Mulungias, the Changnois, the Jabokas, the Banphas, the Mutons, or Kulungs, the Paniduarias, and the Borduarias.² Originally all these sections were Ao Nagas. In later times, at their western migration, they had been distinguished by the names of the Passes through which they descended to the plains.³ We shall show later that against many of the above sections of the Nagas, mentioned by the same name, the Ahom Kings sent expeditions. This fact makes it clear that in 1215, at the time of Sukapha's invasion of Upper Assam, the various Nagas were settled in their present habitat.

The acute love of freedom is, no doubt, the main reason for the Nagas of maintaining a state of perpetual hostility with the powerful neighbours, who wanted to bring them down under their control. But, there were occasionally other reasons also. The Ahoms came to Assam from the Nara country through the land of the Nagas, and it was that land through which they wanted to

-
1. Journal of the University of Gauhati, 1953, p. 46.
 2. A. Mackenzie, North-East Frontier of Bengal, Calcutta, 1884, pp. 93-94.
 3. E. Gait, A History of Assam, Calcutta, 1905, p. 325. 2nd ed.

maintain their diplomatic relations with them (Naras). But neither the foundation of a new kingdom on the part of the Ahoms in the Brahmaputra valley, nor their maintenance of good relations with the Naras in the Hukong valley and upper Burma, were appreciated by the Nagas, who were, as a matter of fact, enjoying the complete sovereignty of the whole region from the valley of Dhansiri to the western frontier of upper Burma. And that was why they tried their best to resist the western migration of the Ahoms, as well as ^{to} ~~their~~ ^{ain} ~~maintenance~~ of friendly relations with the king of Mungkaung, whom they called "Bhai Raja" (Brother King). There was an economic necessity also. Paddy, pulse, chilli, ~~garum~~, pumpkin, cotton, ginger, black pepper, vegetables and iron were produced in the Naga areas in abundance. Among the other exports, cotton was one of the main products of the Naga hills. But by far the most essential of all the exports was salt. From Borhat to the interior of the Naga hills there were several salt springs and from these a considerable quantity of salt was formerly exported to the different parts of Assam.¹ From the record of 1840, it appears that the Nagas living near Jeypore, the Namsang, Pani Dwar, and Bar Dwar Nagas, lived chiefly by manufacturing salt, which they retailed to the people of the plains. There were in the lower hills eighty-five salt wells in all, of which the government was allowed to be absolute owner of only three, enjoying merely a right to a certain number of flues ^{and} fireplaces at each of the others. These rights Purunder Singh had regularly asserted.² So, it is a fact that many neighbours of the Nagas tried their utmost to dislodge them from their rich mother-land.

-
1. R. Wilcox, Selections from the Record of the Bengal Government, Calcutta, 1853, p. 24-25, and ^{Atlix} S.N. Mazumdar, Calcutta, 1925, p.50.
 2. A. Mackenzie, The North-East Frontier of Bengal, Calcutta, 1884, p.92.

It is mentioned in the Buranji that "Long after, one Khunkum was hunting buffaloes. He found a Naga slave named Khunchu. This slave was handed over to the King, Chaotapha, who took him into his favour."¹ This presumably implies that the Naga was found wandering in the forest and captured. We know that among the successors of Khunlung, who ruled at Ma-hau-Mung-Lung, there were two Tsaubwas (kings), ^{both} Chau-tai-pha by name, after Khun-Kwot-Pha, who ruled from 1035-1050.² But the Buranji is clear in mentioning that the Chao-tai-pha, in question was third in descent from Taolulu or (Chou-Lu-Lu), who succeeded ^{the first} another Chao-tai-pha, who ruled from 1050-1062.³ Therefore the Tsawbwa Chao-tai-pha, here referred to must be the latter one, who succeeded Chao-Chang-Nyeuor (Chau-Sang-Yau) in 1103 and ruled up to 1112.⁴ It is evident from the above that the Nagas were in good relations with the fore-fathers of Sukapha the Great, who founded the Ahom dynasty in Assam. Moreover, the word "slave" is significant in this connection. The fact that this Naga was captured and enslaved signifies that there were independent Naga tribes early in the beginning of the twelfth century.

By the beginning of the thirteenth century, the Nagas were in possession of the whole region bordering east of the Patkai hills surrounding the north-west frontier of the Nara kingdom of Mungkang (or Mogaung) in the Hukong valley. In 1224, Sukapha reached the village of Hatikhokia Nagas at the

-
1. G.C. Barua, Ahom Buranji, Calcutta, 1930, p. 24.
 2. N. Elias, History of the Shans, Calcutta, 1876, pp. 16-17 and 26-27.
 3. Same as (1) and (2) above.
 4. Same as (2) above.

border of the Nara territory. Nothing further, in this connection, is mentioned in the Buranji except that Sukapha went back to Mungkang with his followers and was in the plains of the Hukong valley for the next four years.¹ We have already shown that between the rivers Dayang and Buri Dihing, there are some Nagas called Hatigarias, and in the first quarter of the twentieth century the anthropologists have identified them as Ao Nagas.² We do not know whether the Hatikhokia Nagas, mentioned in the Buranji are identical with the Hatigarias. Mills has observed that Aos are an old class of the Naga tribes and have long passed the zenith of its power. In former times, they occupied parts of the present Sema and Lhota country.³ Apart from the above facts, from the geographical point of view, the Hatikhokia Nagas, early in the thirteenth century, appear to be a branch of the Aos. It is to these Ao Nagas that the Ahom kings assigned land grants in the plains to strefrain them from hostilities.⁴ So, it seems that, early in the thirteenth century, the Hatikhokia Nagas were powerful enough to resist the external invaders. The later history will reveal that, almost on every occasion, Sukapha was resisted in his westward migration through the territory of the Nagas. So, we may presume that Sukapha's first expedition against the Hatikhokia Nagas, was an unsuccessful one, and it was only on a second attempt through a ^{different} ~~separate~~ route that he was able with considerable difficulty to force his way across the passes.

-
1. G.C. Barua, Ahom Buranji, Calcutta, 1930, p.44.
 2. S.N. Mazumder, Ao Nagas, Calcutta, 1925, p.8.
 3. J.P. Mills, The Ao Nagas, London, 1926, p.4.
 4. Ibid. p.11.

In 1228, Sukapha came to the principal pass of the Daikham at the boundary of the Naga country. The Nagas of the Namtilikkangtai region, up to the river Khamjan, did not resist the advance of Sukapha. As soon as he crossed the river, the Nagas of the villages Kharukhu, Pungkang, Tithang, Binglao, Latema, Lanpang, Taru, Luknam, Luka, and Taputapa united in a group and attacked Sukapha.¹ They, having been defeated, acknowledged the sovereignty of Sukapha by paying yearly tributes in the form of agricultural products to Kangkhrumung, who was appointed a governor by Sukapha himself.² The next powerful centre of the Nagas, was at Daikaorang (a collection of nine hills). The Nagas of the villages Papuk, Tengkhram, Khunkhat, Khuntung, Tanching, and Jakhang gave battle against the powerful army of Sukapha. A great number of people on both sides were killed in this battle. To horrify the neighbouring Nagas, Sukapha perpetrated inhuman atrocities towards the captured Nagas by cutting them into pieces and compelling some of them to eat the roasted flesh of their relatives.³ But Sukapha was only partially successful in subjugating the Nagas. It is said that in the last encounter Sukapha was greatly helped by the Nagas whom he ^{had} conquered before.⁴ It is mentioned in the Ahom Buranji that king Sukapha after conquering different countries appointed Katakis (Representatives) to realise tributes from them. Among the three mentioned, one was of Naga origin.⁵ So it is clear that during the rule of the early Ahom kings, some of the Nagas held very

-
1. G.C. Barua, Ahom Buranji, Calcutta, 1930, p. 45
 2. G. Barua, Assam Buranji, Calcutta, 1876, p. 84.
 3. G.C. Barua, Ahom Buranji, Calcutta, 1930, p. 45.
 4. H.C. Debgoswami, Purani Asam Buranji, Gauhati, 1922, p. 15.
 5. G.C. Barua, Ahom Buranji, Calcutta, 1930, p. 38.

important posts in the administration. They appear at all times to have been divided; some co-operated with the more civilized rulers of the land, while others staunchly maintained their independence.

The history of the next century and a half, shows that Sukapha's wise policy of appointing some Nagas in the key positions of the administration proved a success in building a newly founded Ahom empire, because we do not hear of any trouble from the Nagas until the year 1397, when Sudangpha, a fugitive of the village Habung, came to the throne. During this period there were troubles within and without. In the reign of Sukhangpha, there was a battle with the Kamatesvar and rebellions within the kingdom.¹ In the reign of Sukhrangpha, there was a conspiracy of Chao Pulai, the Saring Raja,² and in Sutupha's reign, there was battle with the Chutias.³ Moreover on two occasions there were no kings in the country.⁴ It is significant that, during all these disturbances, the Nagas are not mentioned as joining the opponents of the Ahoms, and therefore we may assume that they were faithful to the Ahom kings. But the relations took a turn for the worse in the reign of Sudangpha. He was the first Ahom king to bring the seeds of Hinduism into the Ahom court.⁵ This seems to have resulted in some change in the administration, followed by revolts. It is mentioned in the Ahom Buranji that from 1397, the year of the accession of Sudangpha, to 1404, for eight years, the people of Iton, Khamjang and Tipam, of which the two former were

-
1. G.C. Barua, Ahom Buranji, pp. 47-49, Calcutta, 1930.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.
 4. H.K. Barua, Assam Buranji, Gauhati, 1930, pp. 16-17.
 5. G. Barua, Assam Buranji, Calcutta, 1876, p. 91.

Nagas,¹ did not pay their annual tributes.² At last, with the intervention of the Nara King Chaopha Banak (or Surunpha), the Nagas submitted.³

In 1487, the Nagas of the Tangshu village revolted. They completely defeated the Ahom army on Banruk hill. The Banrukia Gohain and Parbatia Hazarika, along with one hundred and forty Ahom soldiers, were killed in this battle.⁴ It is mentioned in the Buranji that "Shushenpha could not defeat the Nagas but had to retreat" and after a few lines however the same Buranji again says that "a bloody battle was fought in which the Nagas were completely defeated. A large number of the Nagas were made captives and produced before the king."⁵ Evidently the former and the latter history do not agree. The subsequent history suggests that in fact the former is more accurate than the latter. In the following year, 1489, the king died and was succeeded by his son Suhanpha. In 1489, this king sent one Eomung to construct a fort at the village Tangshu. In 1490, war broke out between the Ahoms and the Kacharis.⁶ No sooner was this war concluded that the Nagas renewed their hostilities and cut off the head of the Bargohain, Tyaokangbanrek who was in command of the army. A new Bargohain, Nangaranga by name, was appointed in place of the deceased, and this commander completely defeated the Nagas and made captives the families of the Naga chiefs Tanshu, Nefera and Moupia, who were the leaders of the army.⁷ In this reign, a Naga Garu by name was

Y

-
1. G.C. Barua, Ahom Buranji, Calcutta, 1930, pp. 45 and 54, and p. 51.
 2. Ibid.
 3. N. Elias, History of the Shans, Calcutta, 1876, p. 45. (The Nara king mentioned in the Buranji, is shown here as Chau-Hung-pha and his reign is put between the years 1381-1411.)
 4. G.C. Barua, Ahom Buranji, Calcutta, 1930. p. 52.
 5. Ibid. p. 29.
 6. K.N. Tamuli Phukan, Assam Buranji, Calcutta, 1906, pp. 17-18.
 7. G. Barua, Assam Buranji, Calcutta, 1876, p. 92.

established as subordinate to the Ahom king, at a village near the Sessa river in the Ahom country.¹

In 1504, the Itania Nagas revolted. King Suhungomung sent Bargohain Nangaranga and Burhagohain Khampeng, who marched with a big army against the Nagas and defeated them. The Itanias made peace with the Ahoms by giving four elephants and a girl as presents.²

The later history will reveal that several Naga girls were taken by the Ahoms as tokens of good relations. One of the main trade relations of the Nagas with the Ahoms was in exporting salt from the Naga hills.³ So it appears that, in time of peace, there were social unity and economical coherence between the Nagas and the Ahoms. Mills has observed that "for long the Aos had maintained friendly relations with the Ahom Rajas and several villages received grants of land in the plains in exchange for presents and promises to refrain from raiding."⁴

An interesting event in Naga history took place in the early part of the sixteenth century. A chief from a Naga village was appointed to the post of Barpatragohain, one of the three highest officers of the Ahom administration. It is mentioned in the Purani Asam Buranji that in the absence of the descendants of the king, the succession should take place from the Barpatra family.⁵ Hali Ram Dhekial phukan says that, among the three highest dignitaries in the administration of Assam, the Barpatra Gohain had more power

1. G.C. Barua, Ahom Buranji, Calcutta, 1930, p. 35.

2. Ibid. p. 54.

3. An Officer of the East India Company, A Sketch of Assam, London, 1847, p. 158.

4. J.P. Mills, The Ao Nagas, London, 1926, p. 11.

5. H.C. Deb Goswami, Purani Assam Buranji, Gauhati, 1922, p. 17.

than the other two; his power, prestige and dignity were only second to those of the king.¹

It is mentioned in the Ahom Buranji that "the king Suhumpha made one Kanseng, Barpatra gohain, bringing him from the hill Daiohila. He also gave the Barpatra ten Hatimorias from the Lukkhakhun family. He also made twom persons of the Taikalangia Ahom families Hatimorias.² Gunabhiram, Kasinath and Haliram say that the mother of Kanseng Barpatra gohain was an Ahom queen and write a story describing how she was given to a Naga youth. (See chapter II on the Ahoms, pp. ⁸³84). But the Ahom, Deodhai and Assam Buranji (~~written from the manuscript found in the family of Sukumar Mahanta~~) do not mention the story at all. Moreover the above Buranjists are not unanimous in describing the story. Kasinath and Gunabhiram say that the incident took place in the reign of Supimpha,³ While Hali Ram says it occurred in the reign of Subimpha and the contents of the story ^{are} ~~is~~ different from those of the above.⁴ Moreover the story given in the Purani Asam Buranji ^{is} ~~is~~ even more confusing. Two distinct stories are given; the first mentions that the events took place in the reign of king Sukapha; the second states that ^{they} ~~it~~ occurred in the reign of Suhungmung and the contents do not tally with each other.⁵

Whoever may have been the mother of ^{the} Barpatra Gohain, it is evident that he was born and brought up at Daiohila in the Naga hills. We have already

-
1. H.R. Dhekial Phukan, Assam Buranji, Calcutta, 1829, p. 50.
 2. G.C. Barua, Ahom Buranji, Calcutta, 1930, p. 35. (Ten Hatimoria Naga families were given to Barpatra gohain as Paiks (personal servants).)
 3. See the chapter on the Ahoms.
 4. H.R. Dhekial Phukan, Assam Buranji, Calcutta, 1829, p. 49.
 5. H.C. Debgoswami, Purani Asam Buranji, Gauhati, 1922, pp. 16-17 and 40-41.

quoted that ten Hatimoria Naga and two Taikalangia Ahom families, subjects to the Ahom king, were engaged to Barpatra gohain as Paiks (soldiers or servants who give service for the land ^{the} ~~given to them by the King~~ ^{given to them by the King}). It is mentioned in the Purani Asam Buranji that, in the battle against the Nagas in the reign of Suhung-mung, a chief Kanseng by name helped the Ahoms against the Nagas, when he was appointed as Barpatra Gohain. And henceforward the relatives and descendants of this family are called "Naga-Patra".¹ It is thus evident that at least some of the powerful chiefs from Naga regions had friendly relations with the Ahoms. Kanseng was a great hero. In 1532, when Turbak, a Pathan general, attacked Assam, Kanseng was appointed the Commander of the Ahom army. He fought with the Muhammadan army, killed Turbak, and drove the Muslims away beyond the river Maratoya.²

In 1535, the Nagas of the villages Malan, Pankha, Khaokha, Lukna and Taru of the lower regions and Pahuk, Khamteng, Shiteng and Shireng of the higher regions united in a body and attacked the Khamjangia Gohain (the Ahom Governor), posted at Khamjang. Next the Nagas of Jakhang also joined the above group. Finally the Nagas of Mungjang also participated with them against the Ahoms. It is mentioned in the Buranji that, the expeditions against the Nagas having proved of fruitless, the Katakis ^{messengers} (embassy) were sent by the Ahom king to induce the Nagas to come to terms. A treaty was concluded in which the Nagas are said to have presented one hundred methons (a species of wild cows) to the Ahom king.³

-
1. H.C. Debgoswami, Purani Asam Buranji, Gauhati, 1922, p. 41.
 2. G. Barua, Assam Buranji, Calcutta, 1876, p. 97.
 3. G.C. Barua, Ahom Buranji, Calcutta, 1930, pp. 73-74.

From the above and the later rebellions in the Naga land, it appears that the appointment of Kanseng, a Naga chief, in the post of Barpatra gohain did not solve the Naga problem. If at least a section of the Nagas had been pleased the great majority of them were against the domination of the Ahoms. Later history will reveal that the pacification of the Nagas, though often attempted, ~~to~~ was an ambition which never fully materialised.

In 1536, the Tablungia Nagas revolted. The Ahom army was garrisoned on the border of the Naga villages of Jaktung, Khangja and Namchang. But the Nagas of the villages Jakteng, Shangnan, Jenphan and Shenchai assembled together and entered the village of the Tablungia Nagas to fight the Ahom army encamped near by. The Ahoms were totally routed by the Nagas. The prince, Suklemang, the commander of the Ahom army, along with three other leaders, and their troops, fled at night from their camps leaving four large guns to be captured by the Nagas. At last a treaty was concluded, when the Nagas returned the captured guns.¹

In 1549, there was a quarrel between the Nagas of the villages Banchang and Banpha, and the Banpha Nagas invited the Ahoms to help them to attack the Banchangia Nagas. The combined Banpha and Ahom army attacked the Banchangia Nagas, who were defeated. Chaokingpung, the leader of the Banchangia Nagas was captured. The Ahoms received twenty buffaloes, nine methons and a large coral as booties of the war.²

In 1555, the Hatikhokia Nagas revolted. A battallion of the Ahom army marched towards the spot and garrisoned a place called Namtit.. Another

1. G.C. Barua, Ahom Buranki, Calcutta, 1930, pp. 74-75.

2. Ibid. p. 82.

rebellion of the Nagas took place at Iton, where a similar battallion of the Ahom army was sent. Here the Hatikhokia Nagas were defeated and fled to Khamteng via Papuk, and one hundred of their methons were captured by the Ahoms. In the meantime the Nagas of the villages Iton, Papuk and Khamteng united in a group and attacked Bar-gohain Thaomunglung, who was the commander of the Ahom army. The whole army of the Bargohain having been killed, he himself was at last made a captive in the hands of the Nagas. Next in another engagement on Tadaibungmung hill, the Nagas were defeated and in a treaty they released the Bargohain.¹ It is noteworthy that the Bargohain was not beheaded in captivity. The Nagas in this region at present are by tradition head-hunters. It would seem in fact that at the time, the custom was not prevalent among them. In later years an important leader of an ^{enemy} ~~army~~ people would certainly be beheaded if he fell into their hands.

In 1563, when the Koches invaded the Ahom capital, the king Sukhampha took shelter in the Naga land and remained at Klangdoi hill for three months.² The reason for his taking shelter in the land of the belligerent Nagas may be that the Koches would have been disinclined to follow him into the Naga hills, firstly for fear of the fierce resistance of the Nagas and secondly on account of the difficulty found by the soldiers of the plain in fighting in the hilly regions.

It is mentioned in the Buranji that in 1564, a Naga³ chief Lashaw by

-
1. G.C. Barua, Ahom Buranji, Calcutta, 1930, pp 82-83.
 2. Ibid. p. 87.
 3. In fact the name is given as 'Naka'. As there is no Naka tribe in Assam, we can take it as meaning Naga, The form may be due to a mistake in the transcription of the manuscript or in printing.

name revolted, when the officers of the Ahom king were sent to seize him.¹

In 1571, two Naga leaders Punghang and Pungkhru showed signs of revolt against the Ahom sovereignty.² In 1573, there were uprisings in the villages of Itania and Kheram; but all were suppressed and the wives and children of the Itania Nagas were taken as captives by the Ahoms.³

We find mention of further Naga and Ahom struggles in 1576, the last in the history of the sixteenth century. It is mentioned in the Buranji that in the above year a Naga chief attacked the Ahom territory, killed twenty-six soldiers in battle and occupied Ahom territory up to Lonpong, where there were salt springs. Ultimately a treaty was concluded in which it was laid down that the Nagas could use those springs during the daytime and the Ahoms at night.⁴ From the conditions of the treaty, it seems that the Nagas were in the better position. The above Buranji mentions neither the name of the chief nor the name of the village of the Nagas. We know that in 1575, the Naras⁵ invaded Ahom country and stopped at Khamjang. The Ahom king Sukhampha made friendship with the Naras by giving them one thousand gold mohurs. At the end of that year the Naras left Khamjang but stopped at Itan.⁶ The above two villages Khamjang and Itan were both in the Naga region.⁷ The Buranjis

1. G.C. Barua, Ahom Buranji, Calcutta, 1930, p. 88.

2. Ibid. p. 91

3. Ibid. p. 92.

4. H.R. Dhekial phukan, Assam Buranji, Calcutta, 1829, pp 55-56.

5. The Buranji does not mention the name of the Nara King in whose reign this invasion took place. From the date it seems to have taken place in the reign of Chau-ka-pha II (1564-83), who was very powerful and challenged the supremacy of the then king of Pegu, who was liege lord over Mogaung, Monyin and Momeit at that time.

6. G.C. Barua, Ahom Buranji, Calcutta, 1930, pp. 92-93.

7. See Ante. p-7. pp. 242-43.

do not record anything as to the relation between the Naras and the Nagas. But it seems that, as the Nagas had a history of continuous hatred of and disputes with the Ahoms, they must have co-operated with the Naras, when the latter stationed themselves in their land and prepared to invade the Ahom kingdom. So in 1576, the Nagas were in a good position to inflict a crushing defeat upon the Ahoms and as a result captured the Ahom territory up to Lonpong, where there were salt-springs. The Ahoms probably agreed to an unfavourable treaty because they apprehended aggression from the Naras, and which actually took place next year in 1577.¹

Our sources do not mention any further hostilities between the Ahoms and the Nagas up to the end of the sixteenth century. As we close our studies at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the history of the Nagas can stop here.

It is clear from our survey of the relations between the Ahoms and the Nagas that during our period though some Nagas co-operated with the Ahoms and no doubt gradually merged with them, the Naga tribes as a whole were constantly hostile to the more powerful conquerors of the plains and waged almost continuous guerilla warfare against them. The treaties, which were made from time to time, were never of long duration, and then as now the Naga's pride and staunch independence, though in some ways admirable, was a source of great trouble to the more civilized inhabitants of the region.

1. G.C. Barua, Ahom Buranji, Calcutta, 1930, p. 93.

Conclusion

The Ahoms.

We opened our thesis in the year 1228, the year which saw the immigration of numerous people of the great Tai or ^hSan race from the Hukong valley, Upper Burma and Yunnan. One of their groups was led by Sukapha, who in the first half of the thirteenth century founded the Ahom kingdom in the Brahmaputra valley. He was succeeded by his son Sute^hpha in 1268, maintained his father's hold very cautiously in the face of occasional aggression from the neighbouring tribes. The Ahom kings held their little state with comparatively few changes until, in 1397, Sudangpha^h became king and ruled up to 1407. There were battles during his rule with the Tipamias, Chau-Hungpha, the Nara king, Sukranka, the Kamata king, the Bengal Sultan, Ghiyas ud-din Azam Shah, and the Nagas. In this reign the seeds of Hinduism were sown in the Ahom kingdom. Sudangpha was the ablest of the Ahom kings among the successors of Sukapha^h before the Dihingia line. The rulers, uneventfully succeeding, governed throughout the fifteenth century until the reign of Suhungmung in 1497. He finally conquered the Chutias and annexed their kingdom. He defeated the Kacharis and drove them from the Subansiri valley. He defeated and repulsed three Muhammadan invasions led by Bara Ujir, Luput and Turbak. He fought with Samlungpawmaing or Phuklaimung, the Nara king. He chastised the ^hhostile Nagas and made feudatory the Koch and Manipuri kings. In 1539, he was succeeded by his son Suklémung who defeated Nara Narayan, the Koch king. In 1552, Sukhampha came to the Ahom throne. He made a matrimonial alliance with Chau-Sui-lwei, the Nara king. He subdued the Bhuyans and the Nagas. He fought and ultimately succeeded in repulsing the

Koches from the Ahom land. He defeated Chau-ka-pha the Nara king. He entered into matrimonial relations with Raghudev, the Koch king of the eastern branch, and thence played ^{an} important role in the affairs of the eastern Koches against their rivals the western branch.

The history of the period under review, saw a large influx of the Shan peoples, into Assam and their ultimate adoption of Hinduism. Repeated Muslim invasions were sent to Kamata and Upper Assam from the west, but the Muslims could not permanently hold their sway over the land. Similarly the frequent Nara invasions from the east resulted in no territorial gain. A peculiar form of government was introduced by the Ahoms. There developed a unique style of wooden architecture. During the earlier part of our period the customs and the discretion of the judges were the criterion for justice, but Hindu law was generally followed after Hinduisation.

Kamrup.

The kingdom of Kamrup survived numerous Muslim invasions during our period, and three changes of dynasty. The reign of the Koch king Nara Narayan, which began in 1540, was perhaps the most successful and prosperous period in the history of medieval Kamrup, but in 1581, Raghudev, the nephew of Nara Narayan, rebelled against him and as a result the country was divided into two. The extensive tract east of the river Sankosh was given to Raghudev as his share and he established his headquarters at Darrang. In 1584, Nara Narayan was succeeded by his son Lakshmi Narayan, who ruled the territory west of Sankosh, from his capital at Kochbehar. The later history of the Koches is the narrative of mutual jealousy and rivalry between the two houses.

The period saw enormous changes in the political, social, cultural and religious aspects of the country. The people of Kamata under such rulers as Durlabh Narayan and Nara Narayan, became very powerful and prosperous. There was no power in eastern India to contest the Koch supremacy under Nara Narayan and his brother Sukladhvaj. A very powerful class of aristocracy, known as Bhuyans, evolved out of the soil of Kamata during this period. Though sometimes they were engaged in feuds and dissensions against both one another and the ruling king, they united together for the general cause. The scorched earth policy against ^{invaders} ~~the enemies~~ was known to the Kamata people. It was a period in which the creative genius of the Assamese people reached its climax. Under the influence of the scholars and poets like Hem Sarasvati, Kaviratna Sarasvati, Haribar Bipra, Purusottam Bidyavagish, Sridhar, Pandit Siddhantagagish and Ananta Kandali, the vernacular found its proper recognition as the literary medium, through which the weak and repressed intellect of Assam found its release. During this period the temples at Kamakhya and Hajo were reconstructed, beautiful cities, embankments and fortifications were built. Tanks were excavated and roads were constructed. So, as in military glory, the period was unparalleled in architectural activities. There were hospitals, veterinary hospitals and houses for the blind, lame and old.¹ In the field of religion, the period had ^a ~~its~~ unique position. The debased forms of later Buddhism known as the Vajrayana and Sahajia were at first succeeded by Saktism. By far the most important and interesting event of the period was the Vaisnava reformation.

1. J.H. Ryley, Ralph Fitch, London, 1899, pp. 111-113.

The period witnessed an efflorescence of the Assamese mind, symbolised by Sri Sankaradeva, by whose message of love and forgiveness, the whole of eastern India was carried off its feet. The Assamese mind burst its bonds and found its voice in the sweet lyricism of the cult of Bhakti, in the emotional intensity of a resurgent Vaisnavism. In verse and song, social toleration and religious fervour were propagated, and the exuberance of the religious life of Assam long continued unabated through the earnestness of Madhava dev, Ram Charan Thakur and others.

The Kacharis.

By the beginning of the Thirteenth century, the Kacharis became powerful over the region from the eastern border of Kamrup to the valley of Dhansiri and North Cacharhills. But towards the end of this century, the outlying Kachari territory east of the Dikhu river was ceded to the Ahoms and, during the whole Fourteenth century, that river served as boundary between the two kingdoms. But the sixteenth century saw a considerable growth of Ahom power, and the Kacharis were driven from their capital. When we leave them, however, they are once more gaining somewhat in strength under Yasa Narayan.

The Kacharis are among the earliest peoples of Assam and their Mongolian features give the idea of their Sino-Tibetan origin. They are the remnants of the prehistoric Bodo supremacy in Eastern India. The growing power of the Ahoms in the east and the Koches on the west were an inevitable menace to the Kacharis. By far the greatest and most important feature of the medieval Kachari culture is to be found in the varied architecture of the period. The ruins of Dimapur, and Maibang, bear testimony to their attainments in sculpture, architecture and engineering.

The Jaintias.

The kingdom of Jaintia is of remote antiquity. Its early history is shrouded in mystery, but during the medieval period, the first mention of this kingdom is found in the Vansavalis of the Koch kings. In the middle of the sixteenth century, Nara Narayan, the Koch King, invaded the Jaintia kingdom. Jayantia Buranji mentions the names of Jaintia kings of a remote period, but before the reign of Dhanmanik, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the account is too meagre to construct a political history.

The language of the Jaintias is one of the surviving remnants of the Monkhmer speech in present India. They have matriarchal institutions and the property descends through the females. The chief of the state is succeeded not by his son but by his sister's son. The most interesting and decisive feature of their culture is the erection of monoliths in memory of the dead. They have some peculiar tastes and observances of divine beliefs. The adoption of Hinduism here is of great antiquity, but social custom is by no means wholly in keeping with the Sāstras, even today. The kings and nobles are followers of the Sakta sect and observe rigidly the injunctions of the Sastras.

The Chutias.

The kingdom of Chutia had an early origin. It preserves a long list of the kings from the middle of the seventh century A.D. But the reference to them is actually made first in the Thirteenth century. Throughout our period the Chutias held their own with difficulty against the Ahoms until, in 1523, the last king Dhir Narayan was totally defeated and he and his son or son-in-law were killed in the battlefield. The Ahom king Suhungmung

annexed the Chutia country to his own and appointed a viceroy there.

The Chutias are another surviving remnant of the ancient Bodo inhabitants of Assam. A crude form of Hinduism became the state religion at a very early time and the Caste System was in existence during our period. The influence of a Tantrik form of Saktism was felt in the royal court, and human sacrifices of criminals were offered to the tutelary goddess Kesai Khati (Eater of Raw Meat), a deity who was respected by and had her votaries among all the hill tribes in the vicinity and the Hindu population of the other part of Assam. Pilgrims from the regions far more remote i.e. China and Tibet brought their offerings as a token of their belief and regard for Tantrikism.¹

The Nagas.

The Nagas, who met the invading Ahoms on their way to Assam, were never thoroughly subdued. Throughout our period we read of punitive expeditions against them on the one hand and fierce raids by these tribesmen into Ahom territory on the other. Though some Nagas cooperated with the Ahoms, the Naga tribes as a whole were constantly hostile to the people of the plains and waged almost continuous guerilla warfare against them.

1. An outline grammar of the Deori-chubya language, W.B. Brown (Appendix), Shillong, 1895, p. 77.

The period we have covered was one of great importance in the history of Assam. Until its beginning we have no records of any kingdom other than that of Kāmrūp, and we must assume that civilization had hardly penetrated beyond the strip of territory along the banks of the Brahmaputra which formed the kernel of the Hindu kingdom of Kāmarūpa. With the coming of the Ahoms new blood was brought into the land, which fertilized its culture, and simultaneously brāhmans and other refugees, fleeing from the Muslim invaders of the Ganges valley, brought further racial elements into Assam. The various peoples whose history we have discussed fiercely resisted Muslim attacks from Bengal, and thus provided an outpost of Hindu rule in Eastern India. The gradual growth of orthodox Hinduism in the region throughout our period is noticeable from many passing references in the Buranjis. When our period began only the region of Kāmrūp was strongly influenced by brāhmanic culture. At its end, Hinduism is everywhere, often indeed in a bloodthirsty and corrupt form; but rapidly changing as a result of the work of ^{Vaisnavite} ~~Vaisnavite~~ reformers.

Politically the period is broadly characterised by the gradual growth of the Ahoms, though the Koch kingdom still remained as a powerful rival throughout most of our period. The growth of the Ahoms provided a power strong enough to repel the Mughal invaders of the seventeenth century, and ultimately, in the eighteenth century, to gain overlordship of the whole of Assam.

Though they are not even now a unitary people, the tribes and castes of Assam have today generally a common sense of unity in diversity within the framework of the wider Hindu culture of India. In our study of the political history of medieval Assam we have tried to show some of the means whereby this unity came about.

Bibliography.Buranjis:Ahom:

Barua G.C. Ahom Buranji, Calcutta, 1930.

Assamese:

Barua H.K. Assam Buranji, Calcutta, 1906.

Barua Gunabhiram, Assam Buranji, Calcutta, 1876.

Bhuyan S.K. Kamrupar Buranji, Gauhati, 1930.

Ibid. Deodhai Assam Buranji, Ibid.

Ibid. Asamar Padya Buranji, Gauhati, 1932.

Ibid. Tungkhungia Buranji, Calcutta, 1933.

Ibid. Padshah Buranji, Gauhati, 1935.

Ibid. Kachari Buranji, Calcutta, 1936.

Ibid. Jayantia Buranji, Calcutta, 1937.

Ibid. Tripura Buranji, Calcutta, 1938.

Ibid. Assam Buranji, Gauhati, 1945.

Bhuyan N.C. Asamar Buranjir ek adhyaya, Bara Bhuyan, Jorhat, 1916.

Barua J.K. Chutia Buranji, Jorhat, 1926.

Dutta S.K. Assam Buranji, Gauhati, 1938.

Goswami H.C. Purani Assam Buranji, Gauhati, 1922.

Tamuliphukan K.N. Assam Buranji, Calcutta, 1844.

Bengali:

quoted in

Rudrasinghar Buranji, Ananatullah, Kochbeharer Itihas, Kochbehar, 1936.

Dhekialphukan H.R. Assam Buranji, Calcutta, 1829.

Puthis and Vamsavalis:Assamese:

Arunodaya, (Monthly Magazine), Sibsagar, 1846.

Bhattacharyya M.N. Adi Charitra, Dibrugarh, 1927.

Goswami H.C. Darrag Raj Vamsavali, Calcutta, 1917.

Ibid. Asamiya Sahityar Chaneki, Calcutta, 1923.

Katha Charitra, Assam Buranji, Barua Gunabhiram, Calcutta, 1876.

English:

Bhuyar Puthi, Gait E., Report on the Progress of Historical Research in Assam, Shillong, 1897.

Haragauri Bilas, Ibid.

Thakur R.C. Guru Charitra, Barua K.L., Early History of Kamarupa, Shillong, 1933.

Sanskrit:

Kalikā Purāna, Bangavasi Press, Calcutta, 1892.

Sandhyākaranandi, Rāṇcharitam, Sastri H.P. Memoirs of Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1910.

Vishnu Purāna, Bangavasi Press, Calcutta, 1892.

Yoginī Tantra, Gait E. Report on the Progress of Historical Research in Assam, Shillong, 1897.

Persian:

- Abul Fazl Allāmi Shaikh, Akbarnāmāh, Biblotheca Indica Series and the English translation, Beveridge, H. History of India, Elliot and Dowson, Vol. VI.
- Abdus-Salām, Riyāz-us-salātīn, 1787-88, Biblotheca Indica Series, J.B.O.R.S. Vol. VII. 1921.
- Baranī Ziāu-d-din, Tārīkh-i-Fīroz-Shāhī, Biblotheca Indica Series, and History of India, Elliot and Dowson, Vol. III.
- Lāhorī Abdul Hāmid, Pādīshānāmāh, Biblotheca Indica Series, J.A.S.B., 1872, and History of India, Elliot and Dowson, Vol. VII.
- Minhāju-s Sirāj, Tabākāt-i-Nāsirī, English translation, Raverty, London, 1881, & History of India, Elliot and Dowson, Vol. II.
- Mirzā Nathan Alāu-d-dīn Ispāhānī, Bahāristān-i-ghaibī, English translation by M.I. Bora, Gauhati, 1936.
- Mirzā Muhammad Kāzim, Alamgīrnāmāh, English translation by Vansittart H. Calcutta, 1883.
- Ross E.D. Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica.
- Tālish Shihābu-d-dīn, Fāthiya-i-Ibriyah, J.B.O.R.S. Vol. I. 1915.

Bengali:

- Amanatulla, Kochbeharer Itihas, Kochbehar, 1936.
- Banerjee R.D. Banglar Itihas, Calcutta, 1917.
- Bhattachayya P.N. Kamarupa Sasanavali, Gauhati, 1932.
- Heramba Rajyer Dandavidhi, Gauhati, 1920.
- Bhattacharyya B. Gopichandrer Gan, Calcutta, 1928.
- Maitreya A.K. Gauralekhamala, Rajshahi, 1912.
- Singha K.C. Rajmala, 1898.

English:

- Bhattacharyya S.N. Mughal North East Frontier Policy, Calcutta, 1929.
- Bhuyan S.K. Assamese Historical Literature, Calcutta, 1929.
- Anglo-Assamese Relations, Gauhati, 1949.
- Studies in the Literature of Assam, Gauhati, 1956.
- Barua K.L. Early History of Kamarupa, Shillong, 1933.
- Bell C. Tibet past and present, Oxford, 1924.
- ~~Basson~~ ^{Wheeler} An Outline History of Burma, 1876. ~~Basson~~
- Barua B.K. A Cultural History of Assam, Gauhati, 1951.
- Studies in Early Assamese Literature, Nowgong, 1953.
- Butler J. A Sketch of Assam, London, 1847.
- Basak R.G. The History of North-Eastern India, Calcutta, 1934.
- Basham A.L. The Wonder that was India, London, 1954.
- Banerjee A.C. The Eastern Frontier of British India, Calcutta, 1943.
- Chatterjee S.K. The Place of Assam in the History and Civilisation of India, Gauhati, 1955.
- Choudhury P.C. The History of Civilisation of the people of Assam, London, 1953.
(unpublished Ph.D. thesis)
- Clifford H. Further India, London, 1905.
- Codrington H.W. A short History of Ceylon, London, 1947.

- Cosh J.M. Topography of Assam, Calcutta, 1837.
 Couchman H.C. India and Adjacent countries, Calcutta, 1834.
 Dalton E.T. Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal, Calcutta, 1872.
 Davies H.R. Yunnan- The Link between India and Yangtze, Cambridge, 1909.
 Eden A. Political Mission to Bhutan, Calcutta, 1865.
 Elias N. The History of the Shans, Calcutta, 1876.
 Elliot and Dowson, The History of India, London, 1877, Vols. I-V. 1867-73.
 Endle S. The Kacharis, London, 1911.
 Gait E. A History of Assam, Calcutta, 1905. 1926.
 Grierson G.A. Linguistic Survey of India, Calcutta, 1904. Vol. II.
 Gurdon P.R.T. The Khasis, London, 1914.
 Hall D.G.E. Burma, London, 1950.
 " History of South-East Asia, London, 1955.
 Haig W. Cambridge History of India, Cambridge, 1937.
 Hamilton F. Account of Assam, Calcutta, 1807.
 Haimendorf C.V.F. The Naked Nagas, London, 1939.
 Ethnographic notes on the tribes of the Subansiri region,
 London, 1947.
 Hodgson B.H. Essay the first on Koch, Bodo and Dhimal tribes, Calcutta, 1847.
 Hutton J.H. The Sema Nagas, London, 1921.
 " Jangami Nagas, London, 1921.
 Jesse F.T. The story of Burma, London, 1946.
~~Johnstone J. Captain Welsh's expedition to Assam,~~
 Kakati B.K. Assamese its formation and development, Gauhati, 1941.
 " Aspects of Early Assamese Literature, Gauhati, 1953.
 Lahiri L.M. The Annexation of Assam, Calcutta, 1954.
 Law B.C. Indological Studies, Allahabad, 1954.
 Majumdar S.N. Cunningham's Ancient Geography of India, Calcutta, 1924.
 Majumdar S.N. The Ao Nagas, Calcutta, 1925.
 Majumdar R.C. An Advanced History of India, London, 1948.
 " History of Bengal, Vol. I. Dacca, 1943.
 Mackenzie, The North-East Frontier of Bengal, Calcutta, 1884.
 Martin, Eastern India, London, 1838. Vol. III.
 Mills J.P. The Rengma Nagas, London, 1937.
 " The Lhota Nagas, London, 1922.
 " The Ao Nagas, London, 1926.
 Nath R.M. The Background of the Assamese Culture, Shillong, 1949.
 Neog M. Sankardev and his predecessors, Gauhati, 1953.
 Mourse M.A. A short History of the Chinese, London, 1938.
 Orleans P.H.D. From Tonkin to India, London, 1892.
 Around Tonkin and Siam, London, 1894.
 Prasad I. History of Medieval India, Allahabad, 1925.
 Rajkhowa B. ~~History of Assam, Dibrugarh, 1918.~~
 Ray H.C. The Dynastic History of Northern India, Calcutta, 1936. Vol. II.
 Risely H.H. ~~The Tribes and Castes of Bengal, Calcutta, 1892.~~
 Robinson W. A Descriptive Account of Assam, Calcutta, 1841.
 Sarkar J.N. History of Bengal, Vol. II., Dacca, 1948.
 Shakespeare L.W. The History of Upper Assam, Upper Burma and North-East
 Frontier, London, 1914.
 Smith W.C. The Ao Naga tribes of Assam, London, 1925.
 Sopitt G.A. A Historical and Descriptive Account of the Kachari tribes,
 Shillong, 1885.
 Stein M.A. Kalhana's Chronicles of the Kings of Kashmir, Westminster, 1910.

London

- Stewart C. History of Bengal, 1813.
 Vaidya C.V. Downfall of Hindu India, Poona, 1926.
 Vasu N.N. Social History of Kamarupa, Calcutta, 1926.
 Wade J.P. A Geographical Sketch of Assam, Calcutta, 1800.
 An Account of Assam, Edited by Sarma B. Sibsagar, 1927.
 White H.T. Burma, Cambridge, 1922.
 Williams E.T. A short History of China, Berkeley, 1928.

Records and Catalogues:

- Record of H.M. Nautical Almanac Office, Royal Greenwich Observatory,
 Herstmonceux, Sussex, 1956.
 Catalogue of the Provincial Coin Cabinet, Assam, Allahabad, 1930.
 Supplement to the Catalogue of the Provincial Coin Cabinet, Shillong.
 Catalogue of the Coins in Indian Museum, Oxford, 1906 (Smith V.A).
 Descriptive Catalogue of Assam Manuscripts, Calcutta, 1930.

Anonymous

- Assam and its sites of Historical and Antiquarian interest, unpublished
 typescript in the Library of the School of Oriental & African Studies,
 Government Reports: London, 1930.

Assam Census Report.

Bengal Census Report.

Bengal District Records.

Report on Bengal Districts.

Report and Conspectus of the Kamrup Anusandhan Samiti, Gauhati, 1927.

Report on the Province of Assam, Calcutta, 1854.

Report on the Eastern Frontier of the British India, Calcutta, 1835.

Report on the old records of the Assam Secretariat.

Report on the Progress of Historical Research in Assam, Shillong, 1897.

Selections from the record of the Bengal Government, Calcutta, 1853.

Statistical Account of Assam, London, 1879, 2 Vols.

Statistical Account of Bengal, Calcutta, Vol. 8, 1876, Vol. 10 & 11, 1876.

Journals and Pamphlets.

Calcutta Review.

Indian Antiquities.

Indian Antiquary.

Indian Historical Quarterly.

Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

Journal of the University of Gauhati.

Journal of the Assam Research Society.

Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society.

Journal of the Indian History.

Memoirs of the countries on and near the eastern frontier of Sylhet.

Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

Numismata Orientalia.

Gazetteers.

Assam District Gazetteers.

Bengal District Gazetteers.

The Gazetteers of Upper Burma and the Shan States.

Maps:

- North-East Frontier, Bengal including Sikkim, Bhotan, Assam etc.,
Surveyor General of India, Calcutta, 1865.
- Map of Eastern Asia comprising China, Bootan, Assam, Burma and East Bengal, etc., J.B.Tassin, Calcutta, 1840.
- Map of the countries 21' and 308 N. latitude and 90½' and 99' E. longitude.
- Map of the District of Sebpur, Upper Assam, J. Thornton, Calcutta, 1839.
- Sketch of the country eastward of Rangpur in Assam, I.B.Neufville,
Calcutta, 1825.
- Map of Upper Assam, comprising the districts of Jorhat, Lakhimpur and Sadiya,
etc., J.B.Tassin.
- India and adjacent countries, Assam, Burma and Yunnan, H.J.Couchman,
Calcutta, 1834.
- Map of the eastern frontier of British India with the adjacent countries
extending to Yunnan in China, R.B.Pemberton, Calcutta, 1838.

Atlases:

- Bengal Atlas containing maps of that side of Hindustan, etc.,
J. Rennel, 1781.
- Oxford Advanced Atlas, J.Bartholomew, Oxford, 1936.
- Constable's Hand Atlas of India, J.G.Bartholomew, Westminster, 1896.

Dictionaries:

- Barua G.C. Ahom-Assamese-English Dictionary, Calcutta, 1920.
- Barua H.C. Hema Kosha, Calcutta, 1900.

Location of doubtful geographical names mentioned in this work, in connection with Sukapha's invasion:

Maulung: It is mentioned in the Ahom Buranji that Sukapha, a Shan prince of Maulung, founded the Ahom rule in Assam. It is clear from the same chronicle that this Maulung was somewhere in the present Upper Burma or the Yunnan province of China.¹ In our present state of knowledge, it is difficult to identify exactly the above kingdom. (The word 'Mong' in the Shan vocabulary signifies city or country). There are many places with names similar to Maulung. The following are among the most important:

Mengleng: On the route from Kunlong to Ssu-mao, 100° 15' E., 23° 15' N.²

Menglang: On the route between Yunchou and Talifu, 100° 15' E., 24° 15' N.³

Menglung: On the route between Myitkyina and Yeng~~ky~~ Yueh, 97° 45' E. 24° 45' N.⁴

Muong-le: 101° E., 22° 35' N.⁵

Manglun: A village of the southern Shan state of Kengtung in the district of Mong He.⁶

Manglon: One of the northern Shan states extending from about 21° 31' to 23° N. 100 miles along the Salween.⁷

Monglang: A district of the southern Shan state of Kengtung, 100° 30' E., 21° 30' N.⁸

Monglin: An important district and town of the southern Shan states of Kengtung.⁹

¹A.H.B. pp.42-43.

²Davies H.R. Yun-nan- The Link between India and the Yangtze, Cambridge, 1909,

³Ibid. p.144.

pp.93-94.

⁴Ibid. p.189.

⁵D'Orleans P.H. From Tonkin to India, London, 1892, pp. 73-75.

⁶G.U.B.S.S. P.II. V.II. p.177 .

⁷Ibid. p.165.

⁸Ibid. p. 384.

⁹Ibid. p.385.

Monglang: This Monglang is different from that above mentioned. A circle in the northern Shan state of Hsi Faw, in the eastern subdivision.¹

Monleng: A circle of the Mong Pu district of the southern Shan state of Kengtung.²

Monglong: Chief town and capital of the state of ~~Kachow~~ the same name. A sub-state of the state of Hsi Faw.³

Monglong: This is in Laos, 101° 45' E., 20° 55' N.⁴

In this connection the traditional history of the Shan kingdoms of Mung Mau and Momiet may be helpful.^{4a}

Shortly after their descent to earth, Kun-Lung and Kun-Lai, the ancestors of the Shan people, quarrelled on the subject of precedence, and the former determined to abandon his claim to the kingdom in the Shweli valley and to found a new one for himself. Kun-Lung crossed the Irrawadi and shortly afterwards arrived at a place near the Uru, a tributary of the Kyendwin, where he established himself and founded a city called Maing-Kaing Maing-Nyaung. The actual position of this city is difficult to locate exactly. There is said to be a modern town of Maing Nyaung on a small left tributary of the Kyendwin below the Uru, but above the town of Kendat, and another ~~called~~ Maing-Kaing on the left bank of the Uru. The whole district is perhaps meant. He was succeeded by his son, Kun-Su, who ruled at modern Mung-Nyaung, on or near the Uru. He reigned here for 25 years (A.D. 608-633). He was succeeded by his son ~~Kun~~ Chau-Sen-Sau (633-652), ^{was followed by his} whose son Chau-Kun-Jan (652-667), ^{and he in turn by his} ~~whose~~ son Chau-Kun-Jun (667-78) ruled successively. ^{In} ~~During~~ the reign of

¹G. U. B. S. S. p. 384.

²Ibid.

³Ibid. pp. 388 & 394.

⁴Davies H. R. The Link between India and the Yangtze, Cambridge, 1909, p. 391.

of the last mentioned king, his son Khan-pong-pha went to reside at Mung-Ri-Mung Ran, and afterwards reigned there as king of Mung Man.

Thus Kun-Lung and his posterity reigned at Maing-Kaing Maing-Hyang for 110 years, and meanwhile Khan-Lai had founded a capital called Mung-Ri-Mung-Ran at a short distance from the left bank of the Shuoli, and supposed to be some eight or nine miles to the eastward of the present city of Mung Man. Here he reigned for 70 years, and was succeeded by his son Ai-dyep-that-pha, who ruled for forty years, but who died without issue in 678 A.D. Khan-pong pha the son of Chan-lun-jun, mentioned above, was then created king, and in his person Kun-Lung's line became supreme among the Mau. The length of his reign is not known, but he was followed by his son, during whose rule the capital ^{ung} ^{ung} Ma_A Ri Ma_A Ran declined, and became of secondary importance to the town of Ma-Kan Kung-Lung, which was situated on the right bank of the river and believed to be some six or seven miles west of the capital. This king was succeeded by his younger brother, Kan-Sip-pha, who ascended the throne in 703 A.D. and established his court at Ma Kan Kung-Lung, thus finally abandoning Mung Ri Mung Ran.

During the next 332 years Kan-Sip-pha and his descendants appear to have reigned in regular succession. The succession, however, was broken at the death of Chan-Lip-pha in 1035, and a relation of the race of Taipong of Yun-Lung was placed on the throne in that year. He was called Kun-Kwot-pha and signalled the change in the succession by establishing a new capital, called Cheila, on the left bank of the Shuoli and immediately opposite to Ma Kan Mung-Lung. He is said to have incorporated Bamo ^m ~~with~~ his dominions¹.

1. H.S. pp. 14-15.

At this period the dominant power in all these regions was that of the king of New Pagan, Anawratha (1010-1052). He is said to have extended his sway over the greater part of Burma. In the north, he broke the Shan dominion, which had already disintegrated into many independent states, and subjugated the country as far as Bhamo, while the more remote Shan states, such as Magawng and Mo-hsiyin, retained their independence). Thaton and Pegu were taken and the Talings reduced to subjection. Arakan, which had been invaded, had been held by the Shans for a few years and ultimately became a tributary. The history of Pagan for the next two centuries was one of flourishing progress.¹ In the history of Mung-Man, it is recorded that Kun-Kwot-pha's son and successor gave his daughter in marriage to the Pagan monarch, thus almost implying that he acknowledged him as liege lord. By the beginning of the thirteenth century, Pan-yan-Pung became the king of the Mau kingdom. Before his death in 1210, his younger brother established a new kingdom in the neighbouring state of Moniet. Pan-yau-lung was succeeded by Chan-Ai-Mo-Kam-Keng, of the race of Kun-Su of Maing-Keing Maing-Nyaung, who ruled for ten years and had two sons Chan-Kam-pha and Sam-Lung-pha, the latter perhaps the most remarkable personage in the Mau history. The first succeeded to the throne of Mung Mau at the death of his father in 1220 A.D., but Sam-Lung-pha had already, five years previously, become Tsa^ubwa of Mung-Kaung or Mogaung, where he had established a city on the banks of the Nam Kaung and had laid the foundation of a new line of tsa^ubwas. He appears to have been essentially a soldier and to have undertaken a series of

1. Burma, by Sir Herbert Thirken White. Cambridge 1922. pp. 99-100.

campaigns under his brother's direction or perhaps as Commander-in-chief of his army. The first of these campaigns began by an expedition which he conquered Maing ti (Nan-tien), Monien and Wan chang (Yung Chang) and from thence ^{he} extended his operations towards the south, Kaingua, Maing-Maing, Kiang-Hung, Kaing-Tung, and other smaller states, each in turn falling under the Mau yoke. He ~~took~~ ^{made} a second expedition to the west, and on this occasion crossed the Kyendwen river and overran a great portion of Arakan. A third expedition was then undertaken to Manipur with similar success and again a fourth to Upper Assam, where he conquered the greater portion of the territory then under the sway of the ^uChtiya or Sutyia kings.¹

Moniet included the whole of the country between the left bank of the Irawaddy and Kusambi, or the provinces of Mung-Mau proper, as far north as the territory of the Khamti Shans. It is said that at a time Moniet comprised seven maings (provinces), viz., Dhano, Molai (south-east of Dhano, and probably near Ma-Kan Mung-Lung, the earlier capital of Mau kings), Maing-Lung, Ungbawing, Thibo, Thungsei, Singu and Tagaung.

The first ^u~~tsa~~^w~~u~~^a of the Mau line was called Fu-sang-Kang, the younger brother of the Mau king, Pan-Yan-Pung. His reign is believed to have commenced about the same time as that of his brother (1210). Fu-Sang-Kang had three sons, the elder named Chau-Kang-pha, the second Chan-Zot-pha, and the third Chau-ka-pha; the second of these was created by his father (during his life-time) ^u~~tsa~~^w~~u~~^a of Thibo and the first ^u~~tsa~~^w~~u~~^a of Taipong, the southern maing, or district of Theinni. The youngest, Chanka-pha, succeeded his father

1. H.S. p. 17-18.

at Moniet in 1209 A.D. He reigned here for eighteen years, but then after a quarrel with his elder brother, Shangkapha of Taiyong, abdicated and retired to Mogaung at the time of Sam-Iang-pha's conquest of Assam and, in 1229, he proceeded to the upper portion of Assam and became its first ts^uts^u establishing his capital at Hologurri.¹

From the history of the above two kingdoms, we can determine the geographical position of Maulung or Mung Lung, the land of Sukapha's origin, mentioned in the Buranjis. Kunlai is said to have founded his capital at Mung-Ri Mung-Ran, at a short distance from the left bank of the Shuali, and supposed to be some eight or nine miles to the east of the present city of Mung Mau. We know that the latitude and longitude of this city are 24° and $97^{\circ} 50'$ respectively.² Subsequently the capital Mung-Ri Mung-Ran declined and Kam-Sip-pha, a king of the Mau line, who ascended the throne in 703 A.D. established his court at Ma-Kau Mung-Lung, which was situated on the right bank of the river and believed to be some six or seven miles west of the capital. From the geographical position of present Mung-Man,³ we can know the position of Ma-Kau Mung-Lung. Let us now consider whether this Ma-Kau Mung-Lung can be identified with Mawhung of the Buranjis.

We know that An^wra^htha, the king of Pagan who ruled from 1010-1052, extended his sway over the greater part of Burma. In the north, he broke the Shan dominion, which had already disintegrated into many small independent states and subjugated the country as far as Bhamo. Therefore, at this time, Ma-Kau-Mung-Lung was incorporated into the dominion of the Pagan king. Again

-
1. H.S. p. 50.
 2. H.R. Davies, Map of Yunnan in the Link between India and Yangtze. Cambridge, 1909.
 3. H.J. Douclman, It occurs on the map in India and the adjacent countries, Calcutta, 1834.

Mau history tells us that king Kun Kwot pha who ruled after 1035, established his capital at Cheila, on the left bank of the Shweli. So evidently by this time Ma-Kan Hung-Lung was lost to the Mau kingdom. We also know from the history of Burma that up to the beginning of the thirteenth century, the Pagan rulers were very powerful and maintained their sway over some portion of the northern Shan kingdom. In 1220, the Mau King Chan-Kwan-pha became the king of Mung Mau and in 1215, his younger brother San-hung-pha became the tsay^u~~tsa~~^u of Mogaung on the north. San-Lung-pha is said to have undertaken some ~~an~~ expedition towards the east and south as the commander-in-chief of his brother, perhaps to the Mau territories already captured by the Pagan kings. So, by the beginning of the thirteenth century, Ma-Kan Hung-Lung was not under the suzerainty of the Mau rulers.

Let us now consider the history of Moniet. It is said that at times, Moniet was a state of some significance, and included the whole of the country between the left bank of the Irrawady and Kusanbi, or the provinces of Mung-Mau proper, as far north as the territory of the Khanti Shans, and comprising consequently the tsay^u~~tsa~~^u of Bhano. The kingdom comprised seven Maings, or districts, viz., Bhano, Molai (south east of Bhano and probably near the present Nam-Kan), Maing-Lung, Ungbarng, Thiho, Thangzei, Singu and Tagaung.¹

The first tsay^u~~tsa~~^u of Moniet of the Mau line was Fu-Sang-Kang, the younger brother of the Mau king, Pan-yan-lung. He is said to have ruled about the same time as his brother, who ruled from 1203-1210. He had three sons

1. H.S. p. 19.

of whom the youngest, Chan-Ka-pha, is said to have succeeded his father at Momiet in 1209. We have already seen that Momiet comprised a district called Maing-Lung, but no authority mentions where it was situated in the kingdom. But from a critical study of the above, it may not be difficult to find out the actual geographical position of Maing-Lung.

The south-east portion of present Bhama with which Maing-Lung of Momiet might be identified has in the meantime changed its name. In the kingdom of Momiet, it was called Molai. Therefore, Maing-Lung must be somewhere in the other part of the kingdom of Momiet. In the last century the state of Momiet included ruby mines and the lands of tea-cultivation, and comprised the territory of the Khanti Shans. Moreover, by the beginning of the thirteenth century, Sam-Lung-pha was ruling powerfully from present Mogaung and his brother Chan-Kwam-pha to the territories east of him. As none of these districts were ruled by Fu-sang kang at the time, it is certain that Mau Lung could not have been within their borders. So, we can conclude that in the beginning of the thirteenth century, Fu-Sang-Kang, father of Chan-Ka-pha was ruling in a small state near the territory of the Khanti Shans, near the north-eastern border of Assam, under the suzerainty of the Mau dominion, and Chan-Ka-pha succeeded to this state at the death of his father in 1209 A.D. In the map of eastern Asia by J.B. Tassin and north-eastern frontier, Bengal, by the Surveyor General of India, a place named Moang Lang is mentioned on the bank of Mam Kiu river, though no sources give us information about its history. Sir Edward Gait has taken this place as Mauling, the state of origin of Sukaphe, the founder of the Ahom kingdom in Assam.¹ But he has given no history of the place nor any reason in support of this identification of

1) Map, H.A. First Page.

Moenglang or Maulung. Though Gait gives no argument for his identification, it is evident that Mau Lung lay somewhere in this region. In the present circumstances, unless further sources are forthcoming to disprove our theory, we cannot but take the south-eastern border of the region of the Khanti Shans as Maulung or Moong Lang the land of the origin of Sukapha the Great. In this case we must assume that Sukhangpha, the elder brother of Sukapha, according to the Assam Chronicles, was identical with Chau-ka-pha of Shan tradition. The genealogy of Sukapha as given in Assamese sources differs considerably from that of the Shan chiefs who were ancestors of Chauka-pha, but several names are similar, and it is possible that the Assamese genealogy and the Shan look back to a common source.*

Mongkung:- (Burmese Maing-Kaing) - A state in the eastern division of the southern Shan states, lying approximately between $21^{\circ} 15'$ and 22° north latitude and $97^{\circ} 15'$ and $97^{\circ} 50'$ east longitude, with an area of 1,642.75 sq. miles. It is bounded on the north by Hsi Paw; on the east by Mong Tung Kehsi Mansan and Mong Nawng; on the south by Lai Kha; and on the west by Lawk Sawk.¹

In the case of ^{the} Mongkung or Monglang of ^A Ahon Buranji² the same difficulty arises as in the case of Maulung. In Upper Burma and western Yunnan, the place names are frequently changed. Moreover there are many places of the same name. So it is difficult to locate exactly the Monglang of the Buranji. Here in this connection, the discussion of the history of Mogaung may be of some help to ~~find out~~ our conclusion.

* See Appendix D. p. 284.

1. G.U.B.S.S. Pt. II, Vol. II, p. 378.

2. A.H.B. p. 45.

The most important province or section of the Mau kingdom under the central state of Mung-Mau was that known at the present day as Mogaung, 97°E and 25°15' N. In the legend of Kun-Lung we saw that the western portion of the province was said to have been occupied by him in the earliest days of Mau history and it was occasionally mentioned as the country of Nara. This Nara country, until conquered by Sam-Lung-pha, together with parts of Khanti formed an entirely independent Nara state. The Naras were a comparatively civilized people, and the few who remain are still regarded in Mogaung, Khanti and Upper Assam as a learned class and are generally employed among the Buddhist priesthood and others as astronomers and writers. Their original home^e was probably in Khanti, though in former times that province extended far beyond its present limits towards the south and west. They were a valley-dwelling agricultural people and superior in point of civilization to the hill tribes by whom they were surrounded. Their independence seems to have continued down to about the reign of the Mau King, Chan-Kam-pha, when the general, Sam-Lung-pha, prior to his extensive conquests, appears to have been created first tsaub^w or chief ruler of the greater part of their country. Under the suzerainty of his brother. The precise date of Sam-Lung-pha's accession in Nara^{country} is somewhat uncertain, but 577 of the Burmese era or 1215 A.D., is the year generally indicated in the Shan records. At this time it is related that Sam-Lung-pha, in crossing the river now known as the Nam Kaung (Mogaung), a short distance above the site of the present Mogaung, found a sapphire drum in the bed of the stream, and, regarding it as a good omen, at once established a town near the spot, and called it Mung-Kaung or

"drum town."¹

If the above Mung-Kaung² is identical with the Mungkang of the Buranji, then it must be somewhere near the present city of Mogaung. (97°E, 25°15' N).

Namken River: In identifying the Namkiur river of the Daodhai Asan Buranji.³ we also find the same difficulty. There are so many rivers in Burma and Yunnan, some of which are called Namkaw, Namkion, Namkung, Namkyeng, Namkai and Namkawng. Let us consider some of them.

The Namkaw rises under Loi Me Nam, on its western face, and runs northwards until it flows into the Nam lai. It is crossed on the road from Hsi law to MongLeng town at KangKang, and is there about twelve yards broad and one foot deep in the dry season.³

Namkion River: - It is in the region between Khamti tract and India. This river was also called Moli-ronai of the Kioutsas, the western branch of the Irrawadi. It was about 160 yards in width and 12 feet deep. The water is clear and sluggish. The latitude and longitude of its point of origin ^{are} is [~] 27° and 97° 30' respectively.⁴

Namkung: - A ~~strom~~ stream in the southern Shan state which rises to the north-west of Keng Hkam and flows eastward into the Manloi, a tributary of the NamPang near Hsai Hkao. It has a course of about thirty miles.⁵

1. H.S. pp. 39-40.

2. (1) Map of Eastern Asia comprising China, Bootan, Assam, Burma and East Bengal etc., by J.B. Tassin, Calcutta, 1840.
(2) North-Eastern Frontier, Bengal, including Sikkim, Bhootan, Assam etc by Surveyor General of India, Calcutta, 1865.
(3) Map of Countries 21° and 30° and 90°30' and 99°, showing the sources of the Irrawadi river and eastern branches of the Brahmaputra.
(4) India and the Adjacent Countries, Assam, Burma and Yunnan (China). Survey of India Office, Calcutta, 1924. Published by H.J. Couchman.

3. G.U.B.S.S. Part II. Vol. II. p. 389.

4. D'Orleans, P.H., From Toukin to India, London, 1898, p. 310.

5. G.U.B.S.S., Part II, Vol. II. p. 615.

Namdvang: - A stream which rises in the hills between Lai Hsak (Lethet) and Ho Loung in the southern Shan states and flows southwards past the town of Ho Fong.¹

Mangkai: - A stream in the trans-Talween northern Shan state of Kengtung. It rises in the hills that separate Mong Yawng from Mongkai and flows westwards into the Nam Ngawn, a tributary of the Nam Lwi. At Mangkai it is ten yards wide and eight inches deep in March. It has a course of about 16 miles.²

Nam Kawng: - The Mogaung river is called NamKawng by the Shans. It rises to the south-east of the Amber Mines in about latitude 26° and flows in a south-easterly direction past Leban, Kamaing and Mogaung into the Irrawadi river, some fifteen miles above Sinko. From Leban down to Kamaing the river is from fifty to eighty yards wide in June, and at Kamaing it divides into two channels, the western one sixty yards and the eastern one hundred yards broad. From here down to its mouth it averages from one hundred and twenty to one hundred and fifty yards in width. In the rains it has a current of from three to three and a half miles an hour.

The Mogaung Chaung is navigable for small launches from June to November as far as Leban, and probably as far as Sadu-Sot. Above this the river bed becomes rocky and shallow and its banks are uninhabited. Mogaung can be reached from the mouth of the river in one or two days by launch; boats take one day from Kamaing to Leban. The river is navigable for large country boats all the year round.

-
1. G.U.D.S.S., Part II. Vol. II. p. 616
 2. Ibid. p. 612.

At Laban and Kamaing the river is fordable in the hot weather, but is crossed by boat in the rains. At Kamaing in January the crossing is eighty yards wide and three feet deep.¹

In this connection, the history of Mungiau and Mogaung, may be helpful. Chan-Ai-Mo-Kan-Heng, of the race of Kun-Su of Maing-Kaing Maing-Hyang, in about 1210 A.D., reigned in ^{the} Mau country for ten years and had two sons Chau-Kan-pha and Sam-Lung-pha, the latter perhaps the most remarkable personage in the Mau history. The first succeeded to the throne of Mung-Mau at the death of his father in 1220 A.D., but Sam-Lung-pha had already, five years previously, become tsamb^w of Mung-Kaing or Mogaung, when he established a city on the banks of the Nam Kaung, a short distance above the site of the present Mogaung.²

If this river Nam Kaung is identical with the Namkiur of the Duranji then it cannot be elsewhere other than the region round about present Mogaung, the ^a latitude and longitude of which are $25^{\circ}15'$ and 97° respectively. ~~Accordingly~~
~~Namkiur or NamKaung can be inserted in the following map.~~³

Mogaung: - A subdivision of MyitMyina district (Latitude 25° to 26° and Longitude 97° to 98°). It is roughly of the shape of an irregular quadrilateral, the lower corners being at Khaung-Kya (Khaung-chi) on the west bank of the third and Upper Defile on the south-east, and the Kachin hills to the

1. G.U.D.S.S. pp. 614 and 339.

2. H.S., pp. 17 and 40.

3. (1) ~~Surveyor General of India, North-Eastern Frontier, Bengal including~~
~~Sikkim, Bhootain etc. Calcutta, 1865.~~

(2) ~~A.J. Percerton, Map of British India, Calcutta, 1828.~~

south of lake Indaw-gyi on the south-west. Along the eastern side it is bounded by the ^{itk}Myingina subdivision and on the west by upper Chindwin district. To the north the subdivision stretches indefinitely. Mogaung is the headquarters of the subdivision of that name. The latitude and longitude are $25^{\circ}15'$ and 97° respectively.

The histories of Mogaung and Mo-Jayin (Mong Kawng and Mong Yang) do not overlap, certainly not in the days of their respective power. It seems probable therefore that they were at different times capitals of the same Shan principality.¹

The legendary Kham Lu is said to have established himself at Mong Kong on the Chindwin (the Maing Kaing of modern maps in the state of Singking Hkanti) and to have ruled all the country west of the Irrawadi. The tract of the country is occasionally referred to as the country of the Nara, and until it was conquered by Sam-Long-Hpa it may be presumed that it was an independent state. The native traditions say that the Nara were the aboriginal population of this region. ~~W~~ Elias thinks their original home was in Hkanti, which formerly extended far beyond its present limits and was divided into two parts - Ai Hkam and Aitou.²

1. G.U.B.S.S., Vol. II. Part II, p. 332

2. H.S., p. 38.

Wilcox, in the Asiatic researches, XVII, p. 441, says that the Hkanti Shans told him that they came from the borders of Siam and Yunnan, and that when they first arrived in their present locality they found it inhabited by "Lemas of the Khaphok tribe".

Major Boileau Pemberton fixed the original home of the Nara in Upper Assam, "in the country of the Moamerias or Muttucks", but he also says that the Shan chieftain of Mogaung "is also called the Nara Raja by the Singphos, and it appears that the term is also applied to the Shans between Hookong and Mogaung."

Francis Buchanan Hamilton says they spoke a dialect very little different from that of Siam and called themselves Tailong, the great Shans. This is supported by the fact that at the present day the language of the

The Paras were a valley-dwelling agricultural people, and far more civilized than the hill tribes who surrounded them. They seem to have remained independent till the time of Hso Hkan Hpa, the Nam Mao valley king, whose brother and commander-in-chief, Sam Long Hpa apparently became the first Sawb^w~~ur~~ of Mogaung and of all the country around. He was tributary to his brother and was appointed several years before he undertook his extensive conquests in Manipur, Assam, and other neighbouring countries. He took possession as Sawb^w~~ur~~ in 577 B.E. (A.D. 1215) and we have seen that he was the founder of the city of Mogaung.¹ It is related that he was crossing the Nam Kaw^w~~g~~, now known as the Mogaung river, a short distance above the site of the present Mogaung, he found a "sapphire drum" (Kawng is the Shan word for a drum) in the bed of the stream. This he regarded as a good omen and established his capital near the spot and called it Mong Kawng. The classical name of Mogaung was Ud^aigiri-rata.

Samlong Hpa's reign as chief of Mogaung lasted only thirteen years for in 1228 .A.D. while he was engaged in his conquest to the west, he appears to have been succeeded by a nephew named Noi Hsan Hpa, a son of the Mao Shan king, who took his father's title, Sao Hkan Hpa, when he became Sawbura of Mogaung.²

Lakhun: - A Kachiri village in MyitKyina district, situated in 27° north latitude and 97°41' east longitude. The inhabitants are Khanti Shans. This can be identified with the Lakhun of the Buranji.³ (Purani Asam Buranji, p. 13)

contd. Shans west of the Irrawadi is more easily understood by the Siamese than any other Tai dialect.

1. See above pp. 272-73.
2. G.U.B.S.S., Part II, Vol. II, pp. 334-35.
3. Ibid. p. 15.

Charaideo Hill: - This is in the Dhopabar ^umaiza, in Sibsagar district was once the burial place of the Ahom kings, and the ruins of their tombs are still to be seen, though they were rifled of their treasures by the Muhammadan invaders in the seventeenth century.¹

Salaguri: - This is in Nantidol tahsil of the Sibsagar district. It is famous for its export of Pat Silk.²

Abhaipur: - Military Police outpost. It is at the foot of the hills occupied by independent Naga tribes.³

Bojduar: - This is in the hills east of the Dikho river and inhabited by the tribes of independent Nagas, who were in political relations with the Ahom government.⁴

Disang river: - It rises in the hills occupied by independent Nagas east of Sibsagar town. It flows a north-easterly course till it reaches the actual Assam territory and then curves back and runs westward right along the north of Abhaipur and ^uSilakuti maiza. When parallel to and about eight miles from Sibsagar town, it takes a bend towards the north and finally empties itself into the Brahmaputra after a total course of 136 miles. Its principal tributaries are, on the right bank the Dirci and Dimau, and on the left bank the Taokak and Safrai. The Disang flows in a deep channel and does not change its course, but in the rains it often overtops its banks.⁵

Dikho river: - West of the Disang is the Dikho, which rises right in the Naga hills, where it forms the boundary between proper Assam and independent

-
1. A.D.G., Vol. VII, p. 5.
 2. Ibid. p. 158
 3. Ibid. p. 226
 4. Ibid. p. 58
 5. Ibid. pp. 6-7.

Naga territory. It enters the district south of Nazira, flows past that place and Sibsagar town, and falls into the Brahmaputra after a course of 120 miles, more than half of which, however, lies in the hills. Its principal tributary in Sibsagar is the Darika, which flows a little the north of Sibsagar town and falls into the Dihing near its mouth. Both of these rivers overtop their banks when in flood, and steps have accordingly been taken to protect the country in the immediate vicinity.¹

Gargaon: - This was the capital of the Ahom kings,² in present Sibsagar district.

Namroop: - There is a tributary of Dihing named Namroop and the adjacent region is called by that name. Now it is a railway station in the N.E. Railway. It is in the present Sibsagar district.

Dihing: - as mentioned in the Buranjis, may refer to either of two modern rivers:

The Buri Dihing: - During its passage through the Sibsagar district, the Brahmaputra receives many tributaries from the south. On the extreme east is the Buri Dihing, which for the last few miles of its course, passes through the borders between the districts of Sibsagar and Lakhimpur. This never actually enters the Sibsagar district. Buri Dihing is the most important river south of the Brahmaputra and it rises in the Patkai range, and flows a tortuous course with a generally westerly direction till it falls into the Brahmaputra, after a course of about 150 miles. Its principal tributaries

1. A.D.G. Vol. VII, p. 7.

2. Ibid. p. 28.

are, on the right bank the Digboi, the Tipling, the Tingrai, and the Sesa; and on the left bank the Tirap and the Hamsang. After leaving the hills, it flows along the southern border of the district past the important settlement at Margherita. It then winds its way through an outlying spur of the Assam range, passes Jaipur, the site of an old cantonment, Mahorklutia, whence it is crossed by the Assam-Bengal Railway, and Khowang; and during the last part of its course forms the boundary between the Lakhimpur and Sibsagar districts. Below Jaipur the floods of the river do some damage, and an embankment was constructed in the time of the Ahom Rajas. The spill water is, however, said to have a fertilizing effect, where the flood is not deep enough to injure the crop. Even as far from its mouth as Margherita, the Dihing is about 200 yards in width. The bed is sandy and in places obstructed with snags, and it is not very largely used for purposes of navigation.¹

The Noa Dihing and Dibru: - The Noa Dihing rises in the Singpho Hills and pursues a westerly and then a northerly course till it falls into the Brahmaputra east of Padiya. Through the greater part of its course it flows through jungle land, and, as in the higher reaches the current is very strong, it is of little importance in the interior economy of the district. It is connected with the Buri Dihing, and its principal tributaries are, on the left bank the Dirak, and on the right the Tengapani. The country between the Dibru-Sadiya Railway and the Brahmaputra is drained by the Dibru, but though it has given its name to the capital of the district, it is not a stream of very much importance. It rises in the Buri Dihing ^una~~sa~~, and receives in the course of its journey towards the Brahmaputra, a large number of petty

1. A.D.G. Vol. VIII, pp. 10-11.

jans and streams, the most important of which are the Dun Duna and the Dangori.¹

The Patkai: - For many centuries there had been communication between Lakhimpur and Burma over the Patkai hills. It was by this route that the Ahoms entered Assam in the thirteenth century, and it was across the Patkai that the Burmese retired nearly 600 years later, when they were driven out of the Brahmaputra valley by the British troops. In the cold weather of 1895-96, a reconnaissance survey was made for the purpose of estimating the cost of carrying a railway over the hills to Burma. The party marched via Ningrangnong and Hamkri, to the summit of the Patkai, where ~~their~~^{the} camp was pitched at about 4,000 feet above sea level. They then followed the Hongyong to its junction with the Loglai, went down that river till it fell into the Turung, and marched along the Turung into the Hukong valley. The party experienced no difficulties in this journey, but it was clear that the cost of carrying a railway, over the hills would be extremely heavy. The plan of the railway was abandoned owing to the high cost of the project. The Hukong valley is very fertile, but is sparsely peopled, and the long march over the hills is a serious obstacle to the development of much trade between Burma and Lakhimpur.²

1. A.D.G. Vol. VIII, pp. 10-11.

2. Ibid. p. 90.

The line of Dharmapal in Kamata:

In the Kamrupar Buranji after the ancient kings, we are told of one Dharmapal, who was defeated by his brother Mani Chandra's wife Maunavati or Mayanavati, who then became the ruler of Kamrup. She was succeeded by his son, Gopi Chandra, and the latter by his son, Bhava Chandra, who had his capital at Chutiapara in Kamrup. Batupal, the son of Dharmapal, and his son Sompal are said to have ruled from the village Kanyaka near Bisvanath.¹ In the beginning of the 19th century, Buchanan, after visiting some ruins in north Bengal, ascribes them to Gopi Chandra and his successors, and arrives ~~to~~^{at} the conclusion that these rulers ruled just before the Khen dynasty, which was in power in Kamata in the second half of the 15th century.² Vasu contends that on Dharmapal's death in about 1675, his weak son Hava Chandra succeeded him. During the rule of the latter the whole land from Kamata to Kamrup was lost.³ Sen states that Govinda Chandra of Tirumalya and Govinda Chandra or Gopi Chandra of the Bengal tradition are the two names of the same person. Gopi Chandra was a king of Vikrampur, in the line of Sri Chandradeva, who is said to have ruled either at the end of the 10th or in the beginning of the 11th century. 'Suvarna-Vihar' of Navadvip was built by Suvarna Chandra, a king of this line.⁴ Bhattacharyya suggests that though Gopi Chandra had so many constructions in North Bengal, his capital was at Tippera-Meherkul. He is of opinion that Gopi Chandra or Govinda Chandra ruled in the beginning of the 11th century.⁵

We have dealt elaborately ^{with} the history of Kamrup or Kamata during the period under review, but we have never found any of these rulers having exercised any authority over any part of the kingdom at any time. At the end of the 10th and in the beginning of the 11th century, the Pala rulers, Brahmapal and his son and successor Ratnapal, were ruling over Kamrup from their capital 'Sri Durjaya' on the bank of the Brahmaputra near the present North Gauhati.⁶ At any rate, we cannot consider these kings of the line of Dharmapal as the rulers of Kamrup or Kamata. There is a hill in Tippera called Mayanamati or Mayanavati, on which Gopi Chandra is said to have his capital, and which might have been named after Gopi Chandra's mother. The statements in the Buranji that Bhava Chandra's city was at Chutiapara can be explained by the supposition that Bhava Chandra had had very friendly relations with the Kamrup king, who might have received him as guest in the city of Chutiapara. Many legends are prevalent of Bhava Chandra, who is said to have been a king of very childish personality. So it may not be improbable to think that, during his stay in Kamrup, Bhava Chandra might have caused a pleasure-house to be built at Chutiapara with proper authority from the ruling Kamrup king, for his regard and respect to the 'Land of Eastern Astrology'.⁷ Dharmapal, who is said to have been the predecessor of Batupal and Sompal, whose capital was at Kanyaka near Bisvanath, is of doubtful historicity. We are inclined to think that the accounts of these rulers represent a very vague and corrupt recollection of the successors of Arimatta, who exercised power up to the territory surrounding Bisvanath on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, because some very extensive lines of fortifications are universally ascribed to these rulers.⁸

¹K.R.B. p.99. ²Martin, Eastern India, Vol.III, pp.406-07. ³S.H.K. V.I.p.215
⁴Bhattacharyya B. Gopichandrer Gan, V.II. p.3. ⁵E.H.K. pp.135-40.
⁶Law B.D. Indological Studies, Allahabad, 1954, p.79. ⁷eg. A.S.B. 1840, p.767.

The letter confirming the date of an eclipse mentioned in the Buranji:

Telephone:
Herstmonceux 3171
Ext. 25.

H.M.Nautical Almanac Office,
Royal Greenwich Observatory,
Herstmonceux Castle,
Nr. Hailsham, Sussex.

8th February, 1956.

N.N.Acharyya, Esq.,
5 Glenloch Road,
LONDON, N.W.3.

Dear Sir,

In reply to your letter of February 6th, addressed to Mr. Sadler, I regret that we are unable to give you any information about earthquakes in Assam in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. I can, however, state that there was a partial eclipse of the Sun on 1486 March 6, of which the maximum phase occurred shortly before local midday. The exact time for the centre of eclipse, quoted by Oppolzer, was 5^h 36^m U.T.

With regard to the matter of earthquakes, I would suggest that you might be able to get some information from either Dr. B.C.Browne at Trinity College, ~~Cambridge~~ Cambridge, or Brigadier G. Bomford at Brasenose College, Oxford; but I am not sure whether the records available in either place will be sufficient to give you the exact dates on which the earthquakes occurred.

Yours faithfully,

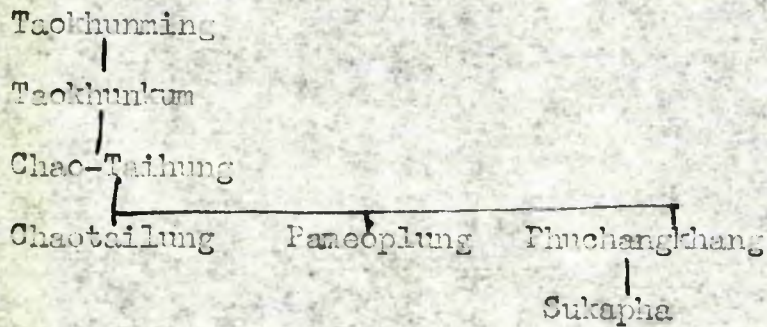
Sd. Harold W.M.Richards
for Superintendent

H.W.P.R.

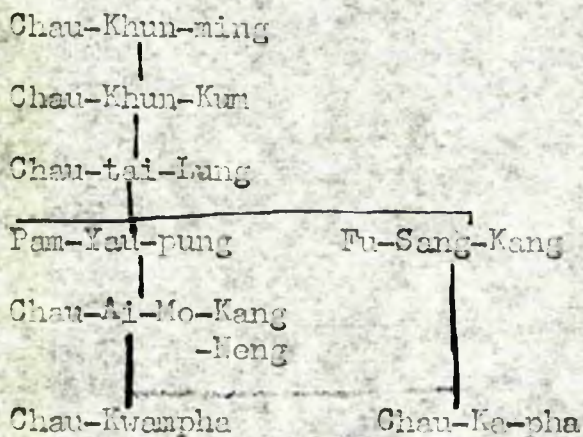
APPENDIX D.

Immediate ancestors of Sukapha of Ahom chronicles and Chaukapha of the Shan tradition compared:

1. Ahom Chronicle:¹



2. Shan tradition:²



¹A.H.B. p.24.

²H.S. pp. 26-27 & p. 52.

GLOSSARY.

Bachāri	A kind of war boat.
Bargohāin	One of the three highest dignitaries of the Ahom state.
Barpātragohāin	Ibid.
Būhāgohāin	Ibid.
Bhuyān	Chief.
Chomdeo	Image of the tutelary deity of the Ahoms.
Dāngaria	Nobleman.
Deodhāi	Ahom priest.
Deorī	Chutiapriest.
Dhailung	Ahom priest.
Got	A group of four paiks giving service during the year.
Hāzārikā	Chief over 1000 paiks.
Hengdān	Ancestral sword of the Ahom king.
Kājalimukhiā Gohāin	Governor of Kajalimukh.
Kamatesvar	King of Kamata.
Khel	Council or Office.
MarangiKhāwā Gohāin	Governor of Marangi (west of Dhansiri).
Mel	Council or Conference.
Nāmgah	Assembly hall for devotional songs.
Nawāb	Chief over 60,000 paiks.
Pāik	Foot soldier.
Purā	One and a half acre (of land).
Rikkhavān	Ahom ceremony for obtaining long life.
Sadiyākhwā Gohāin	Governor of Sadiya.
Saikiā	Chief over 100 paiks.
Sāring Raja	Governor of Saring (heir-apparent).
Satra	Religious institution serves to propagate Sankarik cult.
Singarighar	Hall of accession.
Solāl gohāin	Governor of Nowgong.
Svargadeo	Heavenly deity (Honourable title of the Ahom king).
Svāga Narāyan	Ibid.
Sukāphā	A tiger from heaven.
Suteuphā	A tiger from heaven to earth.
Subinphā	Flying tiger of heaven.
Sukhāngphā	A happy tiger of heaven.
Sulchrāngphā	An excited tiger of heaven.
Sutuphā	A tiger animal of heaven.
Sudāngphā	A tiger of renowned country.
Sujāngphā	A glittering tiger of heaven.
Suphāphā	A club like tiger of heaven.
Susenphā	A holy tiger of heaven.
Suhenphā	A great tiger of heaven.
Supimphā	A club like tiger of heaven.
Suhungmung	A tiger of renowned country.
Suklenmung	A tiger from the country of screwpine flower.
Sukhāmpphā	A golden tiger of heaven.
Susengphā	A holy tiger of heaven.
Suramphā	A shining tiger of heaven.
Thākuriā	Chief over 20 men.
Tipam Raja	Governor of Tipam (heir-apparent next to Saring Raja).
Umra	Chief over 3,000 paiks.

